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POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES  
OF THE GREAT WAR

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# POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE GREAT WAR

*By*

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## PREFACE

THIS little book is a survey of the world in a state of transition, and almost of chaos. It is a survey of events which have taken place, or are still taking place, under our eyes ; and which it is impossible, as yet, to see in correct perspective. Nobody can possibly tell what will be the outcome of these tremendous events ; and, therefore, nobody can say whether any particular interpretation of them is sound or not. Yet it is impossible to give any intelligible view of them without adopting some interpretation, which may seem to others than the writer a biassed or a jaundiced view. One might perhaps escape the risk of bias by setting down an arid and desiccated summary of events, without interpretation. Yet even this would have to be a selection and an arrangement ; and both selection and arrangement must be dictated by personal judgments as to the significance of the facts. I have preferred to set forth, as honestly as I could, my personal

## PREFACE

view of what has been happening to the world, since and because of the war, in the political field. I warn the reader, therefore, to take this book for what it is—not as an authoritative text-book of received beliefs, but as just one man's view of what is happening during a whirlwind that is still raging.

RAMSAY MUIR.

RICHMOND, SURREY.

*July 1930.*

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# CHAPTER I

## THE FORCES AT WORK

THE further the Great War of 1914-1918 recedes into the past, the more clearly we see how great a turning-point it was in human affairs. We have passed into a new historical era, and all our problems, political, social and economic, are profoundly different from what they were in that remote time which we call "pre-war." The sixteen years since August 4, 1914, have seen greater changes in the political systems and relations of the world than any other period of similar length in history. We call these changes "the political consequences of the war"; and it is the purpose of this little book to analyse them, and to bring out their significance.

It must not be supposed, however, that the changes which we are going to survey were wholly due to the war, or would never have taken place if the war had never been fought. Some of them, no doubt, would have come about less completely, or less

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swiftly ; others might have assumed very different forms. But in the main they have been due to powerful forces which had long been working like yeast in Europe and throughout the world. Even before the war, these forces were putting a severe strain upon the political ideas and institutions of the civilized world, and they would have brought about immense changes even if the war had been averted. The war was, in fact, a sort of fever-paroxysm caused by the working of these forces ; in a broad sense, they were its underlying causes.

This does not mean that the war was inevitable, or that nobody was to blame for its outbreak. No war is ever "inevitable." Every war can be averted, if the responsible men on both sides have sufficient wisdom, patience and self-restraint. But the working of the forces of which we have been speaking put so great a strain upon some of the responsible statesmen of Europe that they were unable to withstand it ; and the war came. We may justly blame those who gave way under this strain ; but we must also try to understand the forces which produced the strain. They were at work before the war, which they made possible. They are at work still, though in different ways, and they have shaped, and are still shaping, the transformation of the institutions and



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ideas of the world which we call "the political consequences of the war."

Our first task, therefore, and the starting-point of any clear understanding of the new era into which the rushing stream of time has brought us, must be an analysis of these forces.

### 1. *Nationalism*

The most potent force which has been at work in the politics of Europe and the world, both before and since the war, has been the spirit of Nationalism; by which we mean the spirit which leads peoples who are conscious of ties of unity in language, race, traditions, modes of life, and beliefs to feel that they "belong together," and to be proud of their nationality. When peoples who are penetrated by this sentiment (whatever its source may be) are disunited, or subject to other peoples, they become restless and discontented, and strive incessantly for unity and freedom: when they have achieved unity and freedom, the pride of nationhood often drives them to impose their own methods and ideas upon other peoples. Hence nationalism has been, throughout the modern era, the most fruitful cause of wars—divided nations striving for unity, subject nations fighting for freedom, triumphant nations aspiring after domination.

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For this reason nationalism is often regarded as a wholly evil force. But it is not so. States that are organized upon a national basis, and unified by national sentiment, are always more stable, and their laws are always better obeyed, than states that are only held together by subjection to a common authority. Moreover, it is only in national states that the institutions of self-government have ever worked well ; because it is only in these states that the people sympathize with one another sufficiently to be willing to submit to the decisions of a majority. Hence it is a good thing that states should be organized on a national basis ; and the advantages of this system more than compensate for the dangers that arise from the friction caused by rival national ambitions.

We have got into the habit of taking it for granted that "states" should correspond with "nations" ; and few of us realize that the "nation-state" never existed during the greater part of human history, or over the greater part of the world's surface. It began, indeed, in Western Europe during the Middle Ages. The first nation-state to be conscious of its nationhood was England ; France and Scotland followed ; Spain, Portugal and Holland achieved their nationhood later. And because nationally unified states were stronger than others, the rivalries of these



nations filled modern history, and they played the leading parts in the conquest of non-European lands, and in the extension of European civilization over the globe.

When the nineteenth century opened, the only nation-states were still those of Western Europe, except that, across the Atlantic, the United States of America had emerged as a new nation. But the nationalist idea was working like yeast in central and eastern Europe. It was the chief cause of all the great wars of the century. The most remarkable outcome of these wars was the unification of Germany and Italy. They had been divided and helpless for centuries; but as soon as they were united, they stepped at once into the first rank among the powers of the world, began to play a great part in world-affairs, and conceived great ambitions. The little Christian nations of the south-east also obtained during the nineteenth century a partial and incomplete freedom from the domination of the Turks, to which they had been subject for centuries. Their restless strivings after fuller unity were the chief disturbing factor in European affairs for a generation; but the united action of the Great Powers for a time kept these aspirations in check. Meanwhile, outside of Europe, Japan organized herself as a nation-state of the European pattern, and by the

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end of the century she had become one of the great powers of the world. The great British colonies, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, were also asserting their nationhood, though they remained partner-members of the British Commonwealth of Nations because the mother-country made no attempt to discourage or repress their aspirations. The Republics of South America, after a period of chaos, also established themselves as nation-states. Thus the national idea was spreading outwards, from Europe, its birthplace, over all those parts of the world which were most deeply influenced by European civilization.

But there was still a large part of Europe in which the nationalist movement was not yet triumphant; in all these regions the ferment had long been at work, and it was working more actively than ever in the early years of the twentieth century, down to the outbreak of the Great War in 1914. It could only get its way by the break-up of three great non-national empires, the Russian, the Austrian and the Turkish; the formidable power of Germany was also an obstacle to it, partly because Germany included some fragments of the disunited nationalities, partly because she was resolved to maintain the unity of the Austrian Empire. It is significant of the strength and vitality of the



national spirit that all the nation-states, even those that were defeated, were able to withstand the terrible strain of the war, while the non-national empires were burst into fragments. Their destruction made it possible to reorganize a very large part of Europe upon a national basis ; as we shall see in the next chapter.

Nationalism, indeed, largely caused the war. It was not mere accident that the immediate cause of war was the murder of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Sarajevo, for this was the result of the nationalist ferment among the divided Serbs, which threatened the very existence of the composite Austrian Empire. Nationalism also largely determined the result of the war : the final collapse of the Central Powers was hastened by the revolt of the subject peoples of Austria, whose unrest had gravely weakened that Empire from the beginning of the struggle. The nationalist aspirations of the divided or subjugated European peoples were so vitally important both for the course of the war and for the settlement which followed it, that we must very briefly survey them.

(1) In the Balkan Peninsula four little Christian states—Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Roumania—had shaken off the Turkish yoke during the nineteenth century. But none of them was satisfied. There was still



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unredeemed territory under Turkish rule ; and in parts of this territory (notably Macedonia) the various peoples were so intermixed that there was great jealousy between them. In 1912 Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia combined to attack Turkey, and almost drove the Turk out of Europe. But in the next year, 1913, they quarrelled over the spoils ; and Greece and Serbia, joined by Roumania, attacked Bulgaria, and deprived her of the greater part of her conquests ; while the tiny state of Albania, which was to have gone to Serbia, was declared an independent state under the protection of the Great Powers.

These two Balkan wars were a sort of prologue to the Great War : the spark which started the conflagration came from the Balkans, and from the unsatisfied national aspirations of the Balkan peoples. For one of the Balkan nations, Serbia, had aspirations that could not be satisfied at the expense of Turkey alone. Serbia dreamed of becoming a great state by union with the Serbian peoples within the Austrian Empire ; and Austria, backed by her great ally Germany, regarded with dread the nationalist intrigues of Serbia, against whom she had already several times threatened war. Austria had for a century possessed the coast-province of Dalmatia, whose inhabitants were mostly

Serbs ; and she had more recently annexed the Serbian provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina (1908). Serbian intrigues in Bosnia (culminating in the murder of an Austrian archduke, July, 1914), and Austrian fears of Serbian nationalism, were the immediate causes of the war.

(2) The main mass of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, north of the Save and the Danube, was a medley of mutually distrustful nationalities, which were held down by the two ruling races of the German-Austrians in the West, and the Hungarians or Magyars in the centre. In the south-west, just north of the Serbian border, there were many Austrian Serbs, and a great area inhabited by the Croats and the Slovenes, who were closely akin to the Serbs in language and race, though of a different religion : Serbian nationalists dreamed of one day uniting all these peoples, together with the Bosnians, the Dalmatians and the Montenegrins, in a greater Serbia which would rank among the great powers of Europe. This seemed a wild dream in 1914, and it was bound to be opposed by all the strength of Austria and of Germany ; but the dream came true as a result of the war. Again, in the south-east of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the wide and fertile province of Transylvania was mainly inhabited by peasants of Roumanian stock,



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though the upper classes and the traders were largely Hungarians and Germans. If this province could be added to Roumania, which curved round it on the south and east, Roumania would also become one of the major states of Europe. It was this dream which brought Roumania into the war on the side of the Allies in 1916; and this dream also came true after the war. Yet again, in the north-west of the Austro-Hungarian Empire the provinces of Bohemia and Moravia—the most prosperous in the Empire—were inhabited by the Czechs, who had played a great part in history until they had been crushed by Austria in the seventeenth century, and had never forgotten their ancient freedom and power: near them, in northern Hungary, lay the lands occupied by the peasant Slovaks, who were akin to the Czechs and had no love for their Hungarian masters. The nationalist fever was working among these peoples also, before the war; and when the war broke down the old accustomed barriers, they saw and seized the chance of emerging as a united national state. Finally, in the north-east of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the rich province of Galicia had once been a part of the dismembered kingdom of Poland, though most of its inhabitants were not Poles but Ruthenians. But the ruling class were Poles; and when the

opportunity came, they were eager to join with their compatriots over the border. Thus the whole of this wide empire was seething with nationalist unrest.

(3) The extensive kingdom of Poland, occupying a large area in the central European plain, had played a great part in the history of Europe, but had been partitioned in the eighteenth century by the greed of its neighbours, Russia, Austria and Prussia. The Poles had never forgotten their ancient greatness, and never ceased to conspire against their masters. The great bulk of Poland, before the war, was included in the Russian Empire, by which it was very harshly treated. A smaller section was included in the German Empire—the provinces of Posen and West Prussia; and the most persistent efforts of the German Government had failed to Germanize these provinces. A third section was the province of Galicia in the Austrian Empire, to which reference has already been made. It was always certain that, if ever the pressure of the three military empires was relaxed, the Poles would attempt to regain their national freedom. The war gave them their opportunity. When, in 1915–17, the German armies beat back the Russians, Russian Poland passed under German control; and when, in 1918, the power of Germany and Austria collapsed, the



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longed-for chance had come, and Poland saw the restoration of freedom and unity within her grasp.

(4) The downfall of the Russian Tsardom, which was the first marked "political consequence of the war" (1917), gave a vent to the national feeling not only of Poland but of other nationalities that had been absorbed in the Russian Empire. In the far north, Finland—once attached to Sweden, but never Swedish in race or language—had resented her subjugation to Russia, and welcomed the chance of freedom. Farther south, the Baltic Provinces of Estonia, Latvia (or Lettland) and Lithuania were inhabited by peoples of distinctive races and languages. Estonia and Latvia had never in all their history been independent states, nor had they ever played an important part in European affairs. But they were conscious of their distinctive nationalities, and the war gave them an opportunity to assert themselves. Lithuania had, in the fourteenth century, played some part in history; but she had scarcely dreamed of claiming independence, until the war gave her an opportunity. Finally, in the far south, the Russian province of Bessarabia was predominantly inhabited by people of the same stock and tongue as the neighbouring kingdom of Roumania, which had long desired to annex this province.

(5) Even in the unconquered part of the Russian Empire, the nationalist spirit was at work. When the revolution of 1917 broke up the old order, various racial groups whose existence was scarcely known to the west—the Ukraine (in the south-west), the little peoples of the Caucasus mountains, the Mohammedan tribes of Central Asia—began to claim independence. The revolutionary government found it necessary to give some recognition to these claims by permitting the organization, within a federal system, of a number of distinct “soviet republics”; and when the chaos of revolution diminished, the new state emerged as a nominal federation, under the official designation of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, or U.S.S.R.

Thus, over a wide expanse of central and eastern Europe, which extended from the Arctic Ocean to the Ægean Sea, the ferment of nationalism was either actively at work before the war, or was stimulated by the war, and by the breaking up of long-established authority which it caused. If the war had not taken place, some of these nationalities might never have asserted themselves, but might have been gradually assimilated with their neighbours. In other cases, however, and these the most important, the ferment was so active that it formed the chief factor of unrest; and it is probable that there would



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have been no security of peace until these aspirations were satisfied. Whether they could ever have been satisfied without the violent upheaval of war, who shall say? In any case, the outcome of the war placed upon the statesmen who guided the destinies of Europe the heavy task of organizing a series of new nation-states in half a continent, of fixing their relations, and of defining their boundaries.

It was not only in eastern Europe that nationalist sentiment was at work. In western Europe, also, where nationalism had won its earliest triumphs, there were difficult problems, though they were on a smaller scale. The provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, which France had taken from Germany in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and which Germany had taken from France in 1871, had become French in sentiment, though they were mostly German in speech, and had never been reconciled to German rule: the war gave an opportunity for the revision of the settlement of 1871, which France had never accepted. Again, there were "unredeemed" provinces of Italy (*Italia irredenta*) in the Southern Tyrol, and in Trieste: it was the hope of acquiring these lands that brought Italy into the war on the side of the Allies in 1915. Yet again, the border region of Schleswig, between Den-

mark and Germany, which had been seized by Prussia in 1864, contained a considerable Danish population: the war gave an opportunity, which otherwise might never have occurred, of redressing this arrangement.

Nor was the ferment of nationalism limited to Europe. During the generation before the war, it had begun to work in many non-European lands in which the very idea of nationality had never before been conceived. It was working in Egypt, under the British protectorate. It was creating a new spirit among the Turks of Asia Minor, which enabled them to go on fighting after they had been defeated. It had stirred up the Arabs of Arabia, Syria and Mesopotamia to revolt from the Turkish supremacy: for military purposes, these movements were stimulated by the Allies while the war raged, and some satisfaction had to be given to them when the war was over. It was vigorously at work in India, where the political unity first created by British rule had brought to birth a national sentiment that had never before existed in all the long centuries of Indian history. It was astir in the vast realm of China, and was producing on the one hand a desire to get rid of the dominating influence of the west, while on the other hand it was finding expression in attempts at organiza-



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tion on Western models, which were to plunge China into chaos.

The upgrowth of nationalist aspirations in the ancient and potbound civilizations of Asia was indeed one of the most formidable factors in the world-situation : it was beginning before the war, but the war immensely stimulated and accelerated it. The complete domination which the Western peoples seemed to have established over the non-European world was seriously threatened by these movements ; they are perhaps the sign of new tendencies, which will revolutionize the development of a majority of the earth's population.

Beyond question, the spirit of nationalism was the most formidable political factor in the world when the Great War began, and its working played the chief part in determining what we call "the political consequences of the war." But there were other factors also which contributed in an almost equal degree to produce the great upheaval, and which modified, and were modified by, the national idea.

### 2. *Industrialism*

During the century which preceded the Great War, the very foundations of human society were transformed by the Industrial Revolution, which, like the movement of

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nationalism, began in England. Its essence was the introduction of the methods of machine-production, which multiplied twenty-fold the power of men to produce desirable goods, and enormously reduced the price at which these goods could be sold. This revolution depended upon three things : first, new forms of power—steam-power produced by coal, and later electric power and the explosive power of the internal-combustion engine ; secondly, new forms of transport, the railway, the steamship and later the motor-car ; thirdly, new forms of finance, whereby the resources of myriads of small investors could be pooled for great enterprises under the direction of skilful financiers—the limited liability company, and the great trust or combine which grew out of it.

For a long time Great Britain enjoyed an immense lead over all other countries in these new activities. But from about 1840 onwards the new methods were rapidly extended over western Europe, and, indeed, over the world ; and when the twentieth century opened, Western civilization had been pretty completely industrialized.

The first result of this tremendous process was to knit Europe and the whole world more closely together. A network of railways covered all the most highly developed countries, and twenty thousand ships plied un-



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ceasingly upon all the seas of the world, interchanging the products of every country with those of every other. The whole world was ransacked for the materials of industry; incessant invention found new uses for every product; and eager salesmen sought markets for their goods in every quarter. The volume of international trade was multiplied a hundredfold. The whole world rapidly became a single economic unit. With startling rapidity the dress, customs, food and amusements of all peoples became assimilated to one another. Myriads of interlacing filaments of trade bound all the peoples of the earth together, and made them interdependent. It seemed as if the unifying force of industry and commerce would gradually overcome the separative force of nationalism; and, indeed, in the long run, this result is inevitable, if civilization is tough enough to survive.

But everywhere, or almost everywhere, the nations took alarm. They feared lest the growth of international trade, and the interdependence which it caused, should make them no longer self-sufficient. They feared lest the nation which was economically most powerful should become also most powerful for war. They set themselves, by means of tariffs, to make themselves independent of what their rivals produced, while still hoping

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to make their rivals dependent upon what they produced. They waged fierce tariff wars against one another, and national hostilities which sprang from political causes often assumed the form of an economic conflict, as in the once-famous "pig-war" by which Austria strove to ruin Serbia by refusing an outlet for Serbia's principal products.

For a brief period in the middle of the nineteenth century, it had seemed as if the nations of Europe would accept the logic of events, recognize their mutual dependence, and encourage the maximum interrelation by permitting full freedom of trade. But from about 1870 onwards this expectation steadily dwindled; nearly all the nations adopted the policy of economic self-sufficiency, that is, of Protection, instead of admitting the fact of interdependence, and accepting the policy which springs from it, that of Free Trade. When the twentieth century opened, only one among the greater states of the world, Great Britain, pursued the policy of free trade, and was enabled thereby to become the central market of the world, the nodus of world-finance, and the chief carrier of world-trade, owning and working half of the world's ships. All the other nations regarded the field of international trade as a field of incessant international warfare. Thus the growth of large-scale industry and the immense expan-



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sion of international trade, instead of being a force that made for peace, actually became, under the influence of nationalism, one of the most fruitful causes of strife. No nation was foolish enough to think that it could enrich itself by creating barriers between the various parts of its domain; but almost all of them were convinced that they could enrich themselves by erecting barriers against the free interchange of the world's products.

### 3. *Imperialism*

The third of the powerful forces that were transforming the world, and that contributed to bring about the war, was the pressure of the Western nations to establish their power over the non-European world. This process had been going on for four centuries—ever since the great explorations of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had disclosed to Europe the new world of the West, and the old world of the East. The dominating part in this cosmic process had been played by the nation-states of the West, Spain, Portugal, Holland, England and France: it was one of the forms in which their national strength and pride found expression. But the lion's share in the work of extending the influence of Europe over the world had fallen to Great Britain, who, when the process was completed, had brought

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under the same flag one-quarter of the earth's surface and one-quarter of its population. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century the process was completed, by an outburst of fierce rivalry among the nations of Europe to gain control over the unoccupied regions of the earth ; and in a single generation Africa and all the isles of the Pacific were partitioned among them, while China barely escaped partition, Persia fell under the divided sway of Russia and Great Britain, and the Turkish Empire seemed to be falling under the controlling influence of Germany. By 1914 there was no part of the globe which had not been brought, directly or indirectly, under European influence ; and the whole world had been brought within a single political as well as a single economic system.

Two motives combined to force on the amazingly rapid development of the period 1880-1914. In the first place, the nation-states of Europe convinced themselves that national pride demanded the acquisition of an overseas empire : in comparison with the three huge world-powers of the British Empire, the Russian Empire, and the United States, the European nation-states seemed to be dwarfed : they aspired to rise to the rank of world-powers, and they succeeded in attaining to this rank during the frenzied rush of that generation. But the later



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comers in the race, Germany and Italy, having only achieved national unity at a very late stage, found themselves handicapped in the race. They, and especially Germany, demanded a "place in the sun" corresponding to their rank among the powers; and these frustrated ambitions helped to produce the unrest which led to the war. In the second place, the needs of modern industry required a constant supply of materials from the non-European world. Some of the products of the tropics, notably rubber and various oils, had become indispensable. And, driven by the desire to achieve economic self-sufficiency, the greater industrial states of Europe aspired to obtain control over territories from which their needs could be supplied. Thus nationalism and industrialism combined to produce the flamboyant imperialism of the generation that preceded the war.

By 1914 a group of gigantic world-powers—the British Empire, the Russian Empire, the American Empire, the French Empire, the German Empire, the Japanese Empire, the Italian Empire—dominated the affairs of the world. Their territories bordered upon one another, and their interests clashed, in most parts of the world. No trouble could break out at any point on the surface of the globe without bringing the danger of war;

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and the interests of these giant powers, all involved in fierce industrial rivalry, were so interlocked that, if war should come, it was almost bound to be a world-war. When war did come, there was no region of the earth, no people however backward or obscure, which was not in some degree involved, and which did not know that it was involved. Thanks to the vigorous imperialism of the European nation-states, the Great War was the first event in human history in which the whole human race was concerned; and it had become plain that the interests of all the races and peoples of mankind were indissolubly connected.

Plainly a very notable era in human history was marked by the attainment of this state of things, dangerous as it was. Whether the mighty world-empires which had been so rapidly brought into existence were likely to last or not, and whether the domination of the European peoples was to be permanent, were, on the eve of the war, and still remain, open questions. But whatever answers time may have in store on these issues, the devouring national ambitions, and the irrepressible industrial energy, of the Western nation-states had brought something like world-unity within sight, and had made it inevitable that the settlement after the war must be one which would affect the whole world.



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“The political consequences of the war” were to be world-wide ; they were not to be limited to Europe.

### 4. *Militarism*

What made the nationalism of the European peoples doubly dangerous was the prevalent conception as to the sources of national strength and power. All the traditions of European history suggested that the power and wealth of a state depended upon its military resources ; that, in the long run, might was right ; and that Providence was always on the side of the big battalions. This is the doctrine of militarism. In the eyes of the militarist the greatness of the British Empire was wholly due to the fact that Britain had long been mistress of the seas, and could work her will beyond them. The great ages of French history had been the ages of Louis XIV and Napoleon, when her armies dominated the continent ; and it was only by “blood and iron” that Bismarck had carved for Germany the path to unity and power. The coming of the era of industrialism had not materially modified these ideas, except to some extent in Britain, where it was obvious that trade rather than the force of arms had been the architect of imperial power. On the contrary, industry itself was apt to be regarded as the handmaid

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of war; and the development of the steel industries or the chemical industries was encouraged largely because these industries could provide the munitions of war.

The belief that, in the last resort, nations could only achieve greatness by force of arms led to certain social consequences, which distinguished the pre-war period from every other period of European history. In the first place, with the single exception of Britain, all the nations of Europe trained the whole of their male population for war. Compulsory military service, first introduced in France in the revolutionary age, had been scientifically developed by Germany; and the methods of Germany were generally imitated. When the whole manhood of a country is subjected during its most impressionable years to military discipline, it acquires the habit of respect and obedience to the officer class. In every European country save Britain military officers wielded a very high degree of influence, and their ideals and conceptions of national policy greatly influenced governments. Nowhere was this more markedly the case than in Germany, where the officer class was, in many respects, the real governing class of the country.

Amid the intense national, imperial and industrial rivalries of Europe, and with the



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general acceptance of the doctrine that Force is the ultimate deciding factor in human affairs, every nation naturally lived in constant dread of its neighbours, and wasted its substance in building up armaments in preparation for a possible and likely conflict. The competition in armaments grew more and more alarming, more and more burdensome. Some of the lesser nations, which realized that they could not compete, were relatively exempt from the burden; their weakness was their strength. But for the most part, all the peoples of Europe were spending upon armaments a very large proportion of the new wealth they were deriving from industry.

Fear also drove the greater nations to strengthen themselves by the formation of alliances. Germany, the greatest of the military powers, began the process by the formation of the Triple Alliance with Austria and Italy. The territories of the Triple Alliance stretched across Europe from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, and isolated the other great powers. The inevitable result was that the isolated powers drew together, and in 1891 France and Russia formed the Dual Alliance, into whose orbit Britain was gradually drawn by fear of Germany during the troubled decade before the war, though she always refused to commit herself to any

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fixed alliance. Thus the Great Powers of Europe were divided into two groups, of nearly equal strength, both armed to the teeth, and watching one another suspiciously, while the minor powers counted for nothing. Every important European question was settled by bargaining between these formidable groups.

This division of Europe, and consequently of that major portion of the world which depended upon the European powers, was a new thing in history. It has been called a condition of "Balance of Power"; but it was very different from the old balance between a number of powers, under which any aggressiveness on the part of one could be checked by a combination of the rest. There was no higher authority which these formidable rivals recognized; no court of appeal to which their differences could be referred. In the unrestful and precarious condition of world-politics, a clash between them seemed to be, sooner or later, all but inevitable. This was the most terrifying of all the factors in the pre-war situation. It was the outcome of the doctrines of militarism, of the fact that force and not law was generally regarded as being the ultimate arbiter in human affairs. And the greatest of all the problems which faced the world after the war was the problem of discovering some



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means of preventing any renewal of this hideous situation, and of making law, and the conscience of humanity, rather than mere force, the ultimate deciding power.

### 5. *Democracy*

A further cause of ferment in the pre-war world, both inside and outside of Europe, was the growth of democracy, and its struggle to achieve its ends in the economic as well as in the political sphere.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the system of representative government, born in England, existed nowhere in the world save in the land of its origin and the daughter-country of America; and even in Britain it had long been merely the vehicle for the power of an aristocracy which was out of touch with the needs of a changing age. But during the course of the century, and especially during its second half, the system spread, with astonishing rapidity, throughout the whole world of Western civilization, and into all the countries which had fallen under Western influence. Britain extended her franchise, in cautious stages, until it had become genuinely democratic, though still far from universal. Most of the other countries in Europe passed, almost at a single leap, into manhood suffrage. In the decade before the war, Russia and Turkey

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made attempts to follow the prevailing fashion. Outside of Europe, all the greater British colonies, and all the South American republics, became (in reality or in name) self-governing democracies. The Empire of Japan adopted a parliamentary system along with the rest of the system of the West. In the decade before the war Persia set up the semblance of a Parliament ; China overthrew its ancient despotism and was about to fall into anarchy under the forms of a democratic republic ; India and Egypt were full of unrest because they were denied the institutions of self-government. Within two generations representative democracy had become one of the essential marks of every civilized state. Never, in all history, had there been so sudden and so universal a movement in the same political direction.

Alongside of this political change, universal popular education was established in all the more civilized countries of the world ; and the upgrowth of a popular press in all countries, together with an immense increase in the circulation of books, placed at the disposal of the new democracies (if they liked to use them) the means of acquiring knowledge about public affairs, and of making their power real. This was a revolution in human affairs only less profound than the transformation in the material conditions of



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human life which was being effected by industrialism.

A growth so swift could not be deeply rooted; and there were many misgivings about democracy in the years before the war. In the more backward countries it was merely the cloak behind which corrupt cliques enjoyed the realities of power. In Russia the Duma was swept aside, and naked despotism, working through an incompetent bureaucracy, resumed authority. In the Austro-Hungarian Empire the clash of rival nationalities made parliamentary government unreal, and effective power remained in the hands of the monarchy. In Germany, the Reichstag, elected by universal suffrage, was allowed no real authority: the Kaiser, his officers and his bureaucrats, controlled the destinies of the State. In France there were many evidences of corruption and vacillation. Even in Britain, on the eve of the war, the authority of government seemed to be breaking down; and the apparent weakness of the governments in those countries where democracy was most real, undoubtedly encouraged the militarist states to hope for an early victory. Democracy, so recently established, could not in fact work well amid the tension caused by the nationalist, imperialist and militarist rivalries that dominated Europe and the world. The world, as President

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Wilson put it, was "not safe for democracy"; and it was one of the main tasks of statesmanship to make it safe. Yet in the terrible ordeal democracy stood the test extraordinarily well. It was the autocracies that collapsed; all the democratically organized states remained unshaken.

Even more important than the growth and the troubles of political democracy was the growing demand of emancipated peoples that the democratic spirit should find expression in the social and economic spheres. The great industrial changes had upset the old social order. Education, however imperfect, had begun to undermine the habit of submission. Workpeople had learnt to organize themselves in Trade Unions and other such bodies, for common action to exact better terms from their employers. Beginning in England in the troubled years that followed the Napoleonic war, the demand had become more and more vocal that the power of the State should be used to attack poverty, to reduce gross inequalities of wealth, and to secure to the workers a better share of the wealth which their industry created. This movement—reinforced by the humanitarian sentiment, which was stronger during the nineteenth century than in any earlier era of human history—had led, in all countries, but most notably in England, to a long



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series of measures of social reform, and to the assumption of new functions by governments. This kind of work became bolder and more sweeping as democracy extended its range. Even in the countries where the democracy was not permitted to assume real power, those who ruled recognized the necessity of such measures ; and Bismarck's government in Germany showed great vigour and originality in this sphere. Perhaps the most remarkable expression of this new aim was given by the bold series of measures of social reform introduced in Britain, in Australia and in New Zealand before the war.

The extreme form of this movement was that to which the German Karl Marx gave expression. He taught that there must inevitably be a conflict for supremacy between the existing ruling class of capitalist society and the disinherited "proletariat" ; and his disciples believed that no process of gradual amelioration could do any good, but that there must be a violent upheaval, and a reconstruction of the whole social order under the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat," or propertyless wage-earners. Marx had followers in every country : they were most vehement where government was least free. In all the parliamentary countries Socialist or Labour Parties had formed themselves during the generation or two preceding the war : in

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Britain the Labour Party was founded in 1900. Few of these parties adopted the extreme Marxian standpoint. But all of them aimed at destroying the ascendancy of the old ruling classes, and placing power in the hands of direct representatives and members of the working mass.

Thus a profound social revolution was afoot in Europe. Whether the change was to be accomplished gradually or by sudden violence, powerful elements in Western civilization had resolved that a far-reaching social reorganization must be brought about, and that the sovereignty of the democracy must not be limited to the political sphere. Those who held these views in their more advanced forms, moreover, had begun to co-operate: the movement had become international and was creating for itself international organs. Many hoped, before the war, that the labour movements of the world would be strong enough to prevent any outbreak of war, by common action, and perhaps by a general cessation of work; the only war in which the more eager leaders of this movement took any interest being the "inevitable" war of the international "proletariat" against the international "bourgeoisie." These hopes were swiftly dissipated when the war came; for it was soon made apparent that national feeling was enormously more powerful than class sentiment.



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Nevertheless, in several ways, the mass movements which had resulted from the growth of democracy and industrialism profoundly influenced, and were in their turn influenced by, the course of the war. Every government—even those in which the old ruling classes were half aware that they were fighting for their own existence—had to pay regard to them : all the more so because in this war, unlike any of its predecessors, whole nations were engaged, women as well as men. The sacrifices and efforts made by women during the war strengthened their claim to a full participation in political rights. The whole manhood of the belligerent nations was lifted out of its habitual occupations and shaken in its allegiance to the established order. Having taken their share in danger and sacrifice for the defence of their countries, men came back more ready to claim a greater share in the boons of life. And, at a time when thrones and states were toppling, and the whole world had to be reconstructed, it seemed reasonable to hope for the swift realization of “ a new social order.” Among the tasks which faced statesmanship at the end of the war, not the least difficult was that of giving satisfaction to these boundless, millennial expectations.

In Russia, where the old order had been entirely rotten, the war brought about a

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complete collapse ; and the result was that, here and here alone, an attempt was made amid the ruins to build a completely new social order in accord with the teachings of the prophet Marx. The Bolshevik revolution in Russia, which began in 1917, was watched by the rest of Europe with the same kind of fascinated fear which the French Revolution had earlier inspired. For a time, during the chaos of the first few years after the armistice, it seemed possible, and even likely, that the infection would spread to other countries, and especially to the defeated countries where misery was greatest—Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria. Although this was avoided, it was none the less evident that the war had given a new strength and a new direction to the democratic movement, and to the demand for greater social equality. This was one of the most important of “the political consequences of the war.”

### 6. *Internationalism*

Amid the ferment of nationalist, industrial, imperialist, militarist, democratic and socialist aspirations which filled pre-war Europe, there was at work also another set of beliefs and aspirations: the belief that civilization is and must be a unity, that war is mere waste and folly, that the Reign of Law ought to extend to the relations between states as well



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as to the relations between individuals within the state, that there ought to be some common authority capable of settling differences between nations, and that the nations will never be able to make the best of themselves until they enjoy the peace and security which a settled international order can alone give.

What may be called the "international" movement had been in some degree at work throughout the modern age, ever since the Reformation had robbed Europe of the one supreme authority—the Papacy—to which it had previously paid respect. But it was especially active during the nineteenth century. After the Napoleonic War the Great Powers had striven to establish a system of permanent peace, and in 1819 they had announced to the world that it was achieved. Although this hope was disappointed by the nationalist wars of the middle of the century, there had at least survived something which was known as the Concert of Europe, whereby the group of Great Powers consulted together to settle differences and avert war. The Concert of Powers gave to Europe two longer spells of peace than she had known during the modern age—from 1815 to 1848, and from 1878 to 1914. It carried through the Partition of Africa without serious friction. During the years preceding the Great War its

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conferences, time and again, staved off the danger of war. Moreover, the habit of settling disputes by arbitration had grown in an impressive way. Eight international questions were settled in this way between 1820 and 1840; thirty between 1840 and 1860; forty-five between 1860 and 1880; ninety between 1880 and 1900. Then the nations had begun to make arbitration treaties whereby they bound themselves to settle in this way all disputes not affecting their "fundamental interests or honour." Scores of such treaties were made in the decade before the war. Even during the period when Europe was divided into two armed camps, two significant conferences were held at The Hague—in 1899 and in 1907—for the purpose of considering whether the competition in armaments could not be reduced; and although they failed to achieve this end, they set up a Tribunal, or panel of arbitrators, to settle disputes between nations which were willing to resort to this method. The mere fact that these conferences were summoned, and were attended by official representatives of every important state, was in itself a sign that the international movement was not confined to poets and dreamers, but had become a question of "practical politics." Moreover, the nations were actively co-operating in various ways:



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they had established not only common rules of war, but a common system of copyright; the postal system of the world was regulated by an International Postal Union; and an international commission regulated the navigation of the Danube. The opinion of the civilized world was in fact moving in an international direction; and in spite of the fevers of nationalism and militarism, this trend was constantly being strengthened by the perfecting of communications, by the weaving of ever more complex trade connexions, and—perhaps most important of all—by the growing power of Science, which knows no frontiers.

The war seemed, at first, to have destroyed this powerful movement. Yet the very ruin which it wrought showed to all nations how dependent they had become each upon all the rest. The peoples of Europe learnt—or ought to have learnt—that they suffered far more by the severance of their relations than they could conceivably gain by the most decisive victory. They learnt, also, that they could no longer do without the non-European world; that not only America, but Asia and Africa, were necessary to their existence. The war, in short, showed that the world had become a single economic and a single political system; and that civilization must be blotted out unless it could find

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some means of achieving peace and justice in the relations between peoples, and avoiding the hideous waste and folly of war. The embattled youth of the nations had to be encouraged to endure their ordeal by the belief that this was "a war to end war." And no sooner had the carnage commenced, than thinkers and statesmen in all countries, but perhaps especially in Britain and America, began to frame and discuss projects for the shaping of a world-order which should save civilization from the menace that overhung it. Thus the war, instead of destroying, deepened and strengthened the international movement. And among the immense tasks which faced the statesmen of the world when peace came, none was felt to be more vital or more urgent than the establishment of some sort of international system which should substitute the Reign of Law for the arbitrament of force.

All these forces—movements—tendencies—were fermenting together in pre-war Europe: all of them were brought to a sort of culmination by the war. They inevitably determined the general character of its political consequences. But the precise form which these consequences were to assume depended in part upon the temper of the peoples concerned, and in part upon the quality and character of the statesmen to



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whom they entrusted the duty of framing the settlements. Never, in the whole history of the world, have more tremendous opportunities been offered, or more terrifying responsibilities been imposed, upon any group of men than those which had to be undertaken by the war-worn and war-embittered statesmen who came together in 1919 to rebuild the shattered world.

## CHAPTER II

### THE SETTLEMENT AFTER THE WAR

#### 1. *The Peace Conference*

THE conflicting forces which we tried to analyse in the last chapter not only brought about the war, they were intensified by it; and, when the time came to make a settlement, it was these forces which dictated its general character. People sometimes speak as if the terms of the peace treaties were invented and dictated by the group of responsible statesmen who signed them, and as if these statesmen could have made a totally different kind of settlement if they had seen fit to do so. Nothing could be further from the truth. The most that statesmen could do was to guide, and slightly to modify, the influence of forces which were beyond their control—by which, indeed, they themselves were inevitably influenced.

Nominally the peace settlement was the work of an immense Conference which met at



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Paris in January, 1919. This gathering was the nearest approach to a representation of the whole human race that had ever come together in the history of the world. In form, indeed, it was only an assembly of the victorious powers. The defeated states were not represented until they were summoned to hear their fate; the neutral states were excluded; and Russia, now in the throes of the Bolshevik revolution, stood aloof. But the empires of "the principal allied and associated powers"<sup>1</sup>—Britain, France, the United States, Italy and Japan—included nearly half of the land-area of the globe. During the last stages of the war, many states which had taken no part in the fighting had hastened to declare war against Germany, and thus China, Siam and most of the South and Central American Republics were represented in the conference. Moreover, the chief insurgent peoples which had been included within the empires of Germany, Austria, Turkey and Russia were recognized as belligerents, though not yet constituted as organized States; and there were in Paris representatives of Poland, of Czecho-Slovakia, of Jugo-Slavia, of the little Baltic peoples, of Arabia, of Mesopotamia, and of

<sup>1</sup> President Wilson insisted upon the use of this phrase in order to make it clear that America still adhered to her refusal to enter "alliances."

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the Zionists who had been promised a "Jewish national home" in Palestine; though only the first three actually signed the treaty. Thus, directly or indirectly, nearly four-fifths of the world's area, and more than four-fifths of its population, were represented in this momentous conference, which opened a new era in history.

The character of the conference necessarily dictated the character of its work. All the groups in this polyglot assemblage came to Paris primarily to secure the best possible terms for their own peoples. But all were aware, also, that it was their business to take part in the fixing of a new order not for Europe only, but for the whole human race; and this august function, although it might be obscured and distorted by the particular ambitions of individual peoples or groups, could not be forgotten. It found its expression in the Covenant of the League of Nations, which was embodied in all the Peace Treaties. On the other hand, the exclusion of the defeated states, of Russia, and of the neutrals, to some extent deprived the conference of its universal character. On one side of its work—and this was the side which appeared most prominent immediately after the war—it was an instrument of punishment, or of vengeance; and this feature, which was no doubt inevitable, was the source of all the



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difficulties which have since arisen from the settlement.

All the delegations brought with them troops of "experts" of many kinds, economists, historians, geographers, ethnologists, as well as diplomats, soldiers and sailors. In the principal countries, especially Britain, France and America, groups of scholars had long been at work, with the authority of their governments, collecting materials and preparing plans for the immense work of reconstruction which lay ahead; while the lesser peoples, and especially the "submerged nationalities," had been actively preparing justifications for their national claims. Paris hummed with the activities and the incessant discussions and controversies of these armies of experts. The British delegation alone occupied twenty hotels. If all this mass of accumulated material was to be thoroughly investigated, and all these theories and claims were to be exhaustively discussed, the Conference might have taken years about its work; and in view of the momentous character of the decisions that had to be reached, time thus spent would not have been wasted.

But while the Conference sat, Europe was rapidly lapsing into chaos. The Austro-Hungarian, the Turkish and (in a large degree) the Russian Empires were in a state of dissolution. In Germany a revolution had

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been carried out, but the new government was not yet firmly established, and there was a real danger of anarchy. It was urgently necessary that duly constituted governments, backed by the force which could ensure obedience, should be set up immediately : there was no time for long arguments. In large regions of the continent, the population was on the verge of starvation, because of the dislocation of all the ordinary machinery of commerce and industry. While the conference carried on its gigantic task of reshaping the world, complete anarchy was only avoided by the work of a series of commissions which were set up by the victor-powers. For a time, a large part of Europe lived under a sort of international government, of a provisional kind, the cost of which was met by large advances of money, chiefly from America and Britain. The remarkable work which was done by these commissions was in itself a proof of the necessity of international co-operation. Whether they would or not, the peoples of Europe had to be one another's keepers.

In these circumstances haste was obviously necessary. There was no time for full discussion and investigation of the immense problems that had to be decided : no time even for debate in the huge and polyglot assembly, especially as all the speeches had to be trans-



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lated into more than one language if they were to be intelligible. So the effective power of decision inevitably fell into the hands of a small group of men, representing the principal powers—Britain, France, America, Italy and Japan. There were many complaints of this usurpation of authority by the Great Powers, and it obviously had drawbacks. But on no other terms could decisions have been reached with the necessary rapidity. The defects of the settlement were in a large degree due to the haste with which it had to be carried out. The surprising thing is, not that the settlement was in many ways defective, but that it was not a great deal worse, and that it was ever achieved at all.

At first control was exercised by a Council of Ten, consisting of the two chief delegates from each of the five Great Powers. Then the main decisions came to be made, for the sake of swiftness and intimacy of discussion, by the five principal delegates alone; they could, of course, draw upon all the expert knowledge at their disposal, and they set up innumerable special commissions to deal with particular problems. Japan soon dropped out, because she was not directly concerned in European questions. The Italian delegate, Signor Orlando, played only a minor part, and at one time left Paris altogether, because

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he thought the claims of Italy were not being fairly considered. Thus the controlling voice in the resettlement of the world fell to three men, who wielded such power as no three men in the history of the world, not even the Triumvirates who reorganized the Roman Empire, had ever wielded before.

These three were the aged French Prime Minister, Georges Clemenceau, known as the Tiger, who was the President of the Conference; the President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, an ex-professor of history who always retained something of the academic outlook; and the British Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, who—alone among European statesmen—had held high office not only throughout the war, but during the eight vexed years which preceded it. The Big Three had at their disposal, of course, all the accumulated knowledge of the experts; they drew upon the work of the numerous special commissions which had been established; and they had to consider the pleas and arguments which were eagerly advanced by the delegates of the insurgent peoples, and by the spokesmen of cherished theories or interests in every part of the world. But it was these three men who had the supreme responsibility for shaping the new order.

Clemenceau, more than seventy years old, was a representative of the old regime: his



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mind was dominated by the conditions which had existed in Europe throughout his lifetime. A man of indomitable courage, and an impassioned French patriot, he had upheld the spirit of his countrymen in the darkest days of the war. His whole life had been coloured by the bitter memory of the Franco-German War of 1870-1. He regarded Germany as the eternal and irreconcilable enemy of his country, and his supreme aim was to punish her, and to bit and bridle her so that she should never again imperil France. His ideal of a reconstituted world was one in which France should be safe, and should hold what he regarded as her rightful place of leadership. But he did not see safety in any vague dreams of world-peace and disarmament. He prided himself upon being a realist, free from sentimental ideas of that sort.

Wilson, on the other hand, coming from America, stood apart from the rancours of Europe. He was pre-eminently an ideologue. He had kept America out of the war as long as possible ; and before she entered, he had preached to an embittered and desperate world the idea of "peace without victory." In a series of lofty speeches he had laid down, from the other side of the Atlantic, the outlines of a new world-order which should be "safe for democracy," and from which war

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and militarism should be banished. The "Fourteen Points" in which he had defined the conditions of peace had been accepted by Germany as the terms on which she laid down her arms. When Wilson came to Europe—the first American President who had visited the Old World during his term of office—he was hailed with enthusiasm as the harbinger of the new order; and he took himself very seriously in this capacity. Two big ideas dominated him. The first was that of "self-determination" (a phrase he had borrowed from the Russian Bolsheviks), which meant that every nation had a right to freedom and self-government; and before the conference met he had already committed himself to the cause of the Poles, the Czecho-Slovaks, and other suppressed nationalities. The second was the idea of internationalism—the idea of an organized co-operation between free nations for the settlement of differences and the avoidance of war; it was his insistence that ensured the inclusion of the Covenant of the League of Nations in all the peace treaties. But he had not thought out clearly the consequences of his own ideas. He had not realized the dangers implicit in nationalism, or the need of guarding against them. Nor had he at all clearly worked out how his vague idea of a League of Nations was to be applied in practice. He was not, in fact, a very prac-



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tical statesman ; otherwise he would have realized that he could not commit the American people to the policy he advocated. He had not even taken the precaution of bringing with him any of the leading members of the party opposed to him in American politics. He therefore had to suffer the humiliation of seeing the rejection by his own country of the provisions which he had persuaded Europe to accept on the assumption that America stood behind them ; and of raising false hopes which he was unable to fulfil.

Lloyd George was a statesman of a very different type from his two colleagues. He had a subtler, quicker and more ingenious mind than either of them. He lacked their obstinacy, and their fixed ideas. He was not a doctrinaire, like Wilson. He did not, like Clemenceau, look at world politics exclusively from the point of view of a single nation ; for he was the spokesman of the British Empire, a complex of very various nations, which is held together not by forms and laws, but by the constant exercise of the art of compromise, and by mutual understanding. Like Wilson, he saw that no settlement would have permanence unless it contained within it the promise of lasting peace, and that no such settlement could spring from the spirit of revenge, or was compatible with the merciless subjugation of defeated foes : for this

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reason he stood out against the subjection of some millions of Germans and Hungarians to the less developed new states which were Wilson's and Clemenceau's protégés. But he felt, with Clemenceau, that the rancours created by so terrible a war could not be disregarded, and must have their influence upon the terms of the settlement. He had himself been committed, during the excitements of a post-war election, to pledges which tied his hands; and at one moment he was called home in the midst of the negotiations because a large body of his supporters in Parliament had taken alarm at what they regarded as his weak attitude towards Germany. As eager as Clemenceau to reduce the military might of Germany, he feared lest the result might be to secure for France a military preponderance in Europe; and he strove in vain to secure that the enforced disarmament of Germany should be accompanied by a voluntary disarmament of the other powers. He thus occupied, in some degree, a balancing position between Clemenceau and Wilson. It was largely due to his influence that parts of the treaties, notably the clauses about reparations, were left somewhat vague. His instincts told him that it was not possible to pass at a single bound into a wholly new world-order; that time must be allowed to let the rancours of war die down; and that



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it was unwise to be over-rigidly bound by agreements reached so hurriedly and under the influence of recent war.

The world-settlement, which was mainly devised by these three men, and worked out in detail by a host of special commissions, was embodied in five principal treaties between "the Allied and Associated Powers" on the one hand, and the five defeated states on the other. The first and most important was the Treaty of *Versailles*, with Germany, signed on June 30, 1919: the Treaty of *St. Germain*, with Austria, was signed on September 10, 1919; the Treaty of *Neuilly*, with Bulgaria, on November 27, 1919; the Treaty of the *Trianon*, with Hungary, on June 4, 1920. A treaty with Turkey was concluded at Sèvres in 1920, but it was never ratified; a new war broke out, in which Turkey achieved a remarkable success, and final peace with Turkey was not concluded until the treaty of *Lausanne* was signed in 1923. There were also five treaties for the protection of racial minorities, between the Allied and Associated Powers on the one side and Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, Jugo-Slavia, Roumania and Greece on the other—all concluded in 1919.

It is impossible, in a little book such as this, to discuss in detail all the complicated provisions of these treaties, and all the contro-

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versies that lay behind them. We must content ourselves with a broad general survey of the results of the group of treaties taken as a whole, and the changes which they made in the condition of Europe and the world.

### 2. *International Organization*

There were two important sections which were common to all the five principal treaties ; and these two sections distinguished the treaties from every other treaty that had ever been concluded after a war, in the whole course of human history.

The first section of each of the treaties consisted of the twenty-six articles of the Covenant of the League of Nations, whereby a great League of Peace, designed to include eventually all the peoples of the earth, was established : this was the first attempt ever made by man to institute a common organization for the whole human race, and the attempt—even if, as Heaven forbid, it should ultimately fail—marks a new era in human affairs.

Then, towards the end of each of the treaties, there was a common section dealing with Labour. Stating, in a preamble, that “the League of Nations has for its object the establishment of universal peace, and such a peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice,” this section proceeded to



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establish a permanent International Labour Organization, to be linked with the League of Nations, for the purpose of arranging conferences among the nations on the hours and conditions of labour, and securing the general adoption of universal conventions on these subjects. This was the first occasion, in any international treaty, upon which the well-being of the mass of working folk was made the subject of an international agreement. Its aim was nothing less than to stimulate a world-wide co-operative effort to improve the conditions of life of ordinary working people, and to recognize that this was one of the main ends of political action.

Whatever the defects of the treaty settlement, it cannot be denied that the inclusion in all the treaties of these two sections, backed by the united authority of almost the whole civilized world, marked an extraordinary advance in men's ideas as to what international organization might do.

The establishment of the League of Nations will certainly be regarded by future historians as one of the great turning-point events of history: it was, indeed, the most momentous of all "the political consequences of the war." It did not imply the creation of any super-state, or supreme world-authority: for membership of the League was voluntary, and any member-state might withdraw, after

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due notice, if it so desired. Nor was the League endowed with any powers of compulsion over its members, except in the event of their failure to fulfil the obligations they had voluntarily assumed on joining it. Even in that event, the League as such would have no armed force at its disposal to enforce the fulfilment of obligations ; it must trust to the voluntary action of its members, who pledged themselves, by the act of joining, to take agreed measures against any recalcitrant member. It was not a super-state that was thus set up, but a system of organized co-operation between free and sovereign states, in the common interest. In other words, it was an era of *internationalism*, not an era of *cosmopolitanism*, that opened when the League held its first meeting in January, 1920.

Forty-five sovereign states were scheduled in the treaties as "original members of the League" ; they included the thirty-two "Allied and Associated Powers" which signed the treaty—ten in Europe, the rest outside Europe—and thirteen neutral states which were invited to accede—six in Europe, and seven outside. With one notable exception, all the scheduled "original members" ratified the Covenant, and became full members of the League. But the exception was, unhappily, the richest and most powerful of them all, the United States of America,



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whose Senate—influenced largely by party hostility to President Wilson, who was widely regarded as the author of the League—chose to regard the League as an invasion of its sovereign rights, and refused to ratify the treaty. This was a grave blow to the League at the outset of its career, the more so because, to begin with, there was widespread scepticism as to the possibility of success for this novel and ambitious institution. The defeated States were not, at first, invited to join. But the Covenant made it plain that every self-governing state or colony in the world might become a member; and, one by one, the ex-enemy states have come in, together with the new states of the Baltic, the Irish Free State, Abyssinia and Albania. With the exception of the United States of America, Bolshevik Russia (which despises the League as a capitalist organization) and Turkey, the whole world is now included in the League; and even the abstaining states have taken part in some of the activities which it has organized.

The management of League affairs is, under the Covenant, entrusted to three organs. Once a year there is a meeting, at Geneva, of the *Assembly*, in which every member-state has an equal voice, whether it be as small as Haiti or Liberia, or as great as France or Germany: once a year, that is to say, there

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gathers, on the soil of Switzerland, which has remained strictly neutral for a hundred years, a conclave which represents (with the exceptions already named) the whole human race.

More frequently there are meetings of the *Council*, which is the executive body of the League, and in which, more and more, all those vexed international problems are discussed that used to be dealt with (if at all) in secret conclaves of the Great Powers ; but the Assembly shows a healthy jealousy of any undue exercise of authority by the Council. The Council consists of two elements : "permanent members," representing the Great Powers, and "non-permanent members," chosen by the Assembly. Thus the minor powers, not only of Europe but of the rest of the world, play their part in the discussion of world-policy, and the old dictatorship of the Great Powers has come to an end. The active part played by the minor powers, and the growing influence which is wielded by their opinion, have been among the most striking features in the development of the League : they reflect the decreasing importance of the Great Powers which was (as we shall see) made inevitable by the new distribution of territory brought about by the treaties. In the original form of the League Covenant, there were to have been five "permanent members" and only four



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“non-permanent members”; this would have ensured the predominance of the Great Powers. There are still five “permanent members,” for although the United States has fallen out, Germany has come in. But, on the demand of the Assembly, the number of “non-permanent members” has been raised to nine, so that there is a clear majority for the minor powers. As all the most important decisions, both in the Council and in the Assembly, have to be unanimous, in order to conjure away the fear that the sovereignty of any member-state may be overridden, the numbers on the Council may not seem to matter, since any one State may make any decision inoperative. But it does matter. Somehow or other, the Council does reach agreements; and the weight of the opinion of the minor states counts for more and more. In effect, the organization of the League is not a means of compulsion; it is a means, and a very effective means, of formulating and bringing to bear the weight of world-opinion; and few states will dare to defy this opinion when once it is clearly expressed.

Finally, the League has a permanent and very efficient *Secretariat*, which has its home in Geneva, is staffed by some of the ablest publicists of all countries, and by the mere weight of its knowledge and codified experi-

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ence exercises a growing influence upon the course of international events. The work of this very able body of permanent international officials has, beyond doubt, been the main factor in establishing the influence of the League in its first ten years. We shall have to consider, in a later chapter, the growth of the international way of looking at things which has resulted from this beginning.

There were six main functions which were entrusted to the League by its original Covenant. The first, and the most important, was the preservation of peace, and the substitution of rational methods of settling international disputes for the brutal arbitrament of war. Every member-state of the League pledged itself to use the methods defined by the Covenant, or subsequently worked out by the League itself. The Covenant recognized that there were two main types of international differences: those that were capable of being settled by some form of judicial decision, and those that were not capable of being so settled, because they affected the fundamental interests or honour of the states concerned. For the former, some agreed form of arbitration, or a reference to an accepted Court of Law, was necessary; and it was laid down that one of the first tasks of the League should be to establish an International Court of Justice such as all



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nations would accept. For the more difficult questions of "fundamental interest or honour," conciliation by diplomatic methods was held to be necessary. The Council was entrusted with this task ; and every member-state bound itself to refer all such disputes to the Council, and to await its report before taking any military action : a breach of this undertaking would involve punitive action on the part of other members of the League. Thus, at the least, a delay of a few months would be ensured before war could break out ; and there have been few wars which would not have been prevented by such a delay. Nevertheless, these provisions left a loophole for war in the event of any state refusing to accept the award of the Council : war was not completely outlawed.

The second main function of the League was that of bringing about the progressive disarmament of all its members, in view of the security which the very existence of the League might be supposed to give to them. The Treaty settlement had required the disarmament of all the defeated powers, whose military resources were compulsorily reduced to the minimum necessary for the maintenance of order. But this provision was accompanied by a formal and solemn pledge that the disarmament of the defeated powers would be followed by a similar disarmament on the part

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of the victorious powers. It was left to the League to see that this undertaking was carried out.

A third function, of a new and striking kind, was a certain responsibility in regard to international treaties. Members of the League were pledged to deposit with the League Secretariat all Treaties made by them with other powers. Any treaty not deposited thereby became invalid ; and any treaty-provision which was inconsistent with the Covenant was also declared to be invalid. This was a real safeguard against the conclusion of secret agreements between nations, though it could not be made watertight, or cover agreements not embodied in formal treaties. Moreover, some provision was made for the revision of unsatisfactory treaties. Article 19 of the Covenant expressly empowers the Assembly of the League to advise any of its member-states to reconsider a treaty which has become inapplicable, or to deal with conditions likely to be dangerous to peace. There was in this no power of compulsion. But no state could fail to be influenced by a recommendation of this sort made with all the weight of the Assembly of all nations.

A fourth function was that of guardian of the rights of racial or religious minorities, in those states upon which minority treaties had been



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imposed at the time of the settlement. The minority treaties provided that the very important rights which they secured to minorities should be regarded as fundamental laws of the state, and unalterable ; and they were placed under the guarantee of the League. This was a real safeguard against oppression, especially as it was expressly provided that any member of the League might call attention to a breach of these provisions by any other member. Thus, if the Hungarians in Roumania were being unfairly treated, Hungary could call upon the League to inquire into the matter.

A fifth function, and a very important and novel one, was that of responsibility for the just treatment of certain backward and subject peoples. The territories in Asia, Africa and the Pacific, which had been taken by the victorious powers from the defeated powers (Germany and Turkey), were to be administered by their new masters under "mandates" from the League (Article 22), and in accordance with the principle "that the well-being and development of such (backward) peoples form a sacred trust of civilization." It was to be the duty of the League to call upon the "mandatory powers" for reports as to the way in which their trust was being exercised, to make inquiries where necessary, and (in certain cases) to decide when the need

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for a mandate had come to an end, and the subject people could stand by itself. The adoption of the principle that backward peoples were under the guardianship of the whole civilized world was a new and a very valuable principle; and although it was limited to the territories transferred as a result of the war, it was bound to affect the whole policy of the nations in regard to backward peoples.

Finally, the League was made responsible for a variety of important international functions, including the securing of fair labour conditions (through the International Labour Office), the protection of native populations, the supervision of traffic in women and children and of the opium trade, the control of traffic in arms, the maintenance of freedom of transport, and the international control of disease; while all international bureaux already in existence under general treaties were placed under the direction of the League. These provisions foreshadowed a great and many-sided activity in the forwarding of international co-operation in all sorts of directions; and it might well turn out—as the experience of the first few years of the League was to show—that this kind of practical and constructive co-operative work would be even more effective in knitting the nations together, and thus diminishing the



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danger of war, than the more direct attempt to persuade the nations to disarm and trust for their security to their mutual guarantees.

We shall consider in a later chapter how far the early years of the League have justified the hopes of international good-fellowship which inspired these provisions. In the meanwhile it is obvious that the establishment of an organ of world-opinion, backed by nearly all civilized states, was a great and noble undertaking, which marked the beginning of a new era in human history. Whatever its defects in other regards, the peace settlement which embodied these aspirations in definite institutions deserved respect.

### 3. *The Punitive Side of the Settlement*

General Smuts, who was a leading member of the Peace Conference, but disapproved of some of its results, in reviewing the finished work, claimed that in it were recorded "two achievements of far-reaching importance for the world. The one is the destruction of Prussian militarism; the other is the institution of the League of Nations."

At the time when the settlement was concluded, the first of these seemed to most people the more important. For the allied powers had but just escaped from the menace of complete defeat by the terribly efficient war-machine of Germany, and the smashing

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of this machine seemed the first of all needs. Moreover, in all the allied countries, public opinion almost unanimously laid the blame for the outbreak of the war, and for all its horrors, upon Germany. In Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles, Germany's responsibility for the war was definitely asserted; and the German Government was compelled to accept and sign this statement. No doubt it is true that Germany could have prevented the war had she seen fit to do so, and that she had prepared for it more elaborately than any other power. But it is also true that the working of the forces which we analysed in the last chapter had created conditions which made war extremely likely. The authors of the settlement, having just escaped from a hideous ordeal, had not yet obtained a sufficient perspective to see matters in this light.

Upon the assertion of German responsibility depended the whole series of penal provisions embodied in the Treaty of Versailles. Their severity had no parallel in any earlier treaty. The nearest parallel was the settlement which followed the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, which had lasted for twenty-three years. But the penalties then imposed upon France were so moderate that within three years she had paid off the indemnities exacted from her, had got rid of armies of occupation and of all other restrictions upon



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her independence, and was readmitted into "the comity of Europe." The penalties inflicted upon Germany in 1919 were so crushing, and extended over so long a period, that they have been the chief cause of the long delay in the return of Europe to real peace conditions.

Apart from heavy losses of territory, which we shall have to consider later, and which could be justified as being in accord with the national principle whereby the territorial rearrangements in Europe were governed, Germany was penalized in three main ways.

(1) An attempt was made to bring the supposed authors of the war to justice: in Article 227 the victors "publicly arraign William II of Hohenzollern, formerly German Emperor, for a supreme offence against international morality and the sanctity of treaties"; and they proposed to try him before a solemn tribunal of five judges. Happily this proposal was never carried out: the Dutch, among whom the ex-Kaiser had taken refuge, refused to surrender him. It was also intended that a number of "war-criminals"—German officers who had offended against the laws of war—should be brought to trial before allied military tribunals. This also came to nothing, though a few outstanding cases were brought before German courts.

(2) But the most crushing penalties took

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the form of reparations : Germany was made responsible for all the loss and damage which had been caused by the war, and the only limit to her liability was the limit of what could be taken from her. Immense payments in kind, including the transfer of almost the whole of the German mercantile marine, the free supply of enormous quantities of coal, and the handing over of livestock, machinery, etc., were exacted. All mineral rights in the rich mining area of the Saar Valley were made over to France in compensation for the damage done to the French minefields, and the district was placed under a special administration, subject to the League of Nations. Beyond all this, an immense and indefinite liability for the payment of reparations was imposed upon Germany ; and an allied Reparations Commission was set up to ensure that the maximum was paid. Fortunately no fixed sum was named in the treaty : the following ten years were largely filled with successive conferences which progressively scaled down the impossibly large expectations which were at first formed ; but even so, Germany must be heavily burdened with tribute for some sixty years to come. It is not necessary to deal here with these extraordinary arrangements, which formed a source of unrest and disturbance for a number of years, and prevented



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the return of Europe to normal trading and financial conditions : the subject is more fully dealt with in Professor Bowley's book on *Some Economic Consequences of the War* in this series. Professor Bowley also deals with the kindred and complicated question of the inter-allied debts, which, along with the reparation problem, has dislocated European trade and been a large contributing cause of post-war distress.

(3) Finally, very severe military terms were imposed upon Germany, the object of which was to shatter, once and for all, the terrible German war-machine. All the German territory west of the Rhine, and three "bridge-heads" east of that river, were occupied by allied troops, for a maximum period of fifteen years, as a security for the fulfilment of the treaty. Even when this region was evacuated, it was provided that it, together with the territory for 50 kilometres to the east of the Rhine, should be permanently demilitarized—that is to say, should be denuded of fortresses and troops, and left defenceless. Germany was compelled to abandon the system of compulsory military service, whereby she had trained all her manhood for war, and was forbidden to maintain an army of more than 100,000 men ; while all her stores of guns, rifles, and other munitions, beyond what was needed for this small force, were

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required to be either destroyed or handed over to the allies, a special commission with large powers being appointed to see that these terms were carried out. Practically the whole of the great German fleet had to be surrendered to the allies : the most formidable part of it was sunk, by the Germans themselves, in Scapa Flow, after the surrender ; and the future naval force of Germany was drastically limited—no submarines being permitted. Germany was also forbidden to maintain any military or naval air-forces, and the whole of her existing military aircraft had to be surrendered to the allies.

These drastic and sweeping provisions reduced Germany to a position of defencelessness, in the midst of a ring of powers which still maintained their armaments on as great a scale as before the war. The reduction of a great nation to such a situation could not possibly be permanent. It could only be justified if the disarmament of Germany was to be followed by a similar voluntary disarmament on the part of other nations. This was, indeed, suggested in the preamble to the military clauses of the treaty, in which Germany was required to fulfil the terms imposed “in order to make possible the initiation of a general limitation of armaments” ; and in a formal letter Clemenceau, as President of the Conference, gave a definite



pledge that this would be done. But no attempt was made to include general disarmament as part of the Peace settlement, although Mr. Lloyd George strongly urged that this should be done. No limitation was imposed upon the forces that might be maintained by the new states which were created by the treaties, though this might very reasonably have been done. The only states, besides Germany, whose armaments were limited, were the other defeated powers. The task of fulfilling the pledges given in the treaties was handed over to the League of Nations; which, as we shall see, has been vainly struggling with it ever since.

#### 4. *The New Map of Europe*

It is refreshing to turn from the penal provisions of the Peace settlement, which—necessarily and happily—must be temporary in their nature, to the large political readjustments which are likely to be much more lasting.

With Germany and Turkey at their mercy, the Austrian Empire in a state of dissolution, and all the western provinces of the Russian Empire separated from that power and waiting to be equipped with new systems of government, the powers of the settlement found themselves in a position to re-draw the political map of a great part of Europe. The

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changes which they made were greater than had been made by any single treaty-settlement in the course of modern history, not even excepting Napoleon's drastic but temporary changes. They took as their guide the principle of nationality, and made an honest attempt to identify the boundaries of states with the boundaries of nations, and thus to complete the half-blind process which has been gradually shaping the political map of Europe on national lines during the last seven centuries. In general, they interpreted nationality in terms of language; although, as history has shown in many instances, the linguistic test is by itself insufficient as an evidence of the unity of feeling which nationhood implies. There were, however, certain exceptions to the general rule.

There are large regions in Eastern Europe (as any linguistic map will show) in which languages are much intermixed, so much so that (as we have seen) special provision had to be made for the protection of minorities by a series of minority treaties guaranteed by the League of Nations. In these regions, the decision was in general made in a way unfavourable to the enemy powers. The boundary between Germany and the new state of Poland was drawn in such a way that  $2\frac{1}{2}$  million Germans were left under Polish rule, and the



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German province of East Prussia was left as a detached *enclave* in Polish territory. One-third of the Hungarian people were put under the rule of Roumania, Jugo-Slavia, and Czecho-Slovakia. The German Austrians (now reduced within very narrow limits, with a great capital, Vienna, that could not be supported by its tiny territory) were expressly prohibited from seeking union with their German neighbours (though this would have been in accord with the national principle) lest the result should be to strengthen Germany; and a considerable number of them, in the province of Trent, were transferred to the control of Italy, in order to give to that country a secure position on the north. These new subjects of Italy were denied the protection of a minority treaty, because Italy was a Great Power: events have proved that no community in Europe had greater need of such protection.

The linguistic test of nationality was also abandoned in the case of Alsace and Lorraine. These provinces were restored to France on the valid ground that, though predominantly German-speaking, they were French in sentiment; but this was an admission that language, taken by itself, is not a sufficient evidence of nationality.

Again, the boundaries of Poland were extended far beyond the limits within which the

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Polish tongue prevailed. In this case the plea was that these lands had formed part of historic Poland before the partitions of the eighteenth century ; but the decision may have been influenced by a desire to strengthen Poland so that she should be a bulwark against Germany on the one side and against Russia on the other. In any case the Eastern frontier of Poland was settled by the cessions of Russia : only the Western frontier was fixed by the treaty.

In a few cases—in the Danish-speaking district of Schleswig, in the southern part of East Prussia, in part of West Prussia, in Southern Silesia, in the little district of Teschen—a vote of the inhabitants was taken to decide their fate. The plebiscite in Schleswig led to a reasonable partition of the disputed territory between Denmark and Germany ; that in East Prussia went overwhelmingly in favour of Germany. The plebiscite in Southern Silesia was carried out in 1920 under the direction of the League of Nations. It had the effect of dividing between Poland and Germany a rich coal-bearing district which was economically a single unit, though inhabited by a population of mixed language ; and elaborate provisions had to be made to prevent a complete disorganization of production.

The result of the whole series of changes



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was that some great political units of the past either disappeared from the map, or appeared in a shrunken form ; while new units emerged to play their part in the future.

*Germany* lost a good deal of territory both in the west and in the east : in the west the rich provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, two tiny districts (Eupen and Malmedy) which were added to Belgium, and a strip of Schleswig, added to Denmark ; in the east the large and fertile provinces of West Prussia and Posen, and a part of Silesia. But Germany still remained a nation of more than 60,000,000 souls—the most populous single state in Europe, with the exception of Russia ; and the most industrious and vigorous nation in Europe, without any exception. The idea that she could be permanently kept in a position of impotence and subordination was plainly untenable.

The *Austro-Hungarian Empire*, which had been one of the Great Powers of Europe since the sixteenth century, disappeared, as a political unit, from the map. *Austria* and *Hungary* became two minor land-locked states of the third rank, hemmed in by jealous larger states which included the greater part of the *quondam* Empire's territory ; while their magnificent capital cities, Vienna and Buda-Pesth, were cut off from the wide territories of which they had been the adminis-

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trative and commercial centres, and were threatened thereby with ruin.

The *Turkish Empire* (save for a small territory behind Constantinople and the peninsula of Gallipoli) was excluded from Europe, after more than four centuries, during which it had counted as one of the major European powers. Indeed, if the treaty-makers could have had their way, Turkey would have been excluded from Europe altogether, and would have been reduced to a very minor Asiatic power. In the abortive Treaty of Sèvres, Constantinople and the Straits had been placed under the guardianship of the League of Nations—a very desirable arrangement. But a remarkable revival of Turkish military vigour in 1921 and 1922 put an end to this arrangement; and Constantinople and the Straits were left under Turkish sovereignty by the Treaty of Lausanne, subject to demilitarization under a guarantee by the Great Powers. Turkey also lost the greater part of her Asiatic possessions; but the changes made by the peace settlement outside of Europe will be discussed later.

*Russia* lost all that she had gained on the side of Europe since the time of Peter the Great. The loss of Finland and of the Baltic provinces excluded her from contact with the Baltic Sea: she now had no contact with any European waters except the almost land-



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locked Black Sea. The loss of Poland made her contact with Western Europe more difficult. She had become, in the eyes of the West, a sort of pariah state; and Finland, the new Baltic states, Poland and Roumania—all of which regarded her with fear—formed a continuous barrier between her and the civilization of the West.

Out of the debris of these fallen empires, a number of new states were created; and some older states received a great increment of area and population, which gave them a new importance in international affairs.

Of the new states, Poland and Czecho-Slovakia (Bohemia) were the most important. Both drew strength from an ancient national tradition. *Poland*, with an area of 380,000 square kilometres (larger than Italy) and a population of 29 millions, ranked in size and number, though not yet in economic strength, not far behind the most powerful states of Europe. *Czecho-Slovakia*, with an area of 140,000 square kilometres and a population of 13½ millions, was among the best-developed industrial states of Europe. The other new states—*Finland*, *Estonia*, *Latvia* and *Lithuania*—were of minor importance.

Among the states whose importance was greatly increased, the most remarkable were Roumania and Jugo-Slavia, which, before the war, had been small and backward Balkan

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states. *Roumania* now had an area of nearly 300,000 square kilometres (larger than Great Britain) and a population of  $17\frac{1}{2}$  millions. *Jugo-Slavia* (or, to give it its correct official designation, the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes) was built up round the nucleus of the little kingdom of Serbia by the addition of the Southern Slavonic lands of the Austrian Empire: it had an area of 250,000 square kilometres (larger than Great Britain) and a population of  $12\frac{1}{2}$  millions. In both of these suddenly aggrandized states the new territories, taken mainly from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, were more highly developed and more civilized than the older states to which they were added. Serious troubles have arisen in both cases from this cause; and the Minority Treaties which both had to accept were by no means unnecessary. *Greece* was a third state which rose to a higher standing as a result of the war. She obtained considerable accessions of territory, especially in the fine islands of the Eastern *Ægean*, and a still greater increase of population, when Greek refugees from the Turkish Empire were transferred in thousands to her soil. Her area was now 127,000 square kilometres, and her population  $6\frac{1}{2}$  millions.

Such was, in outline, the new map of Europe. What were its effects? To begin with, it represented the final triumph of the



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national principle. Every European state was now defined in terms of nationality; and since history has shown that the boundaries of national states are extraordinarily stable, it might be hoped that (apart from minor errors and injustices) one principal cause of European unrest had been conjured away.

But the national principle was allowed too complete a triumph. Both in the economic and in the military spheres it was left to work its will unchecked. It was taken for granted that every sovereign state had full power over its own tariff system. The new states all aspired after the false aim of national self-sufficiency, and set themselves to attain it by erecting high tariff walls. And, as the new boundaries in many cases cut across the old lines of trade, this meant that, at a time when a revival of international trade was urgently needed, the obstacles in its way were multiplied. The tariff barriers which stood in the way of the free flow of trade were now more numerous than they had been before the war, and much more severe. This was one of the principal reasons of the slow recovery of Europe from the economic dislocation that had been caused by the war.

In the military sphere the effects of unchecked nationalism were even more disas-

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trous. While the defeated states were compelled to submit to drastic reductions of their forces, and to abandon compulsory military service, no attempt was made to place any limitation even upon the new states. They all adopted compulsory service, and raised large armies. In spite of the reduction of the German army, the number of men enrolled in the armies of Europe after the war was practically as large as it had been on the eve of the war, when the competition in armaments was at its height. The task of bringing about disarmament, which was relegated to the League of Nations, was thus made far more difficult than it need have been.

Even more perturbing were the signs of a renewal of the old vicious system of alliances. The war had left a legacy of fear and hatred. Fearing the possible future vengeance of their defeated rivals, the nations were not yet prepared to trust for safety to the League of Nations, and they were tempted to fall back upon the dangerous methods of defensive alliance. France, haunted by the fear of German revenge (as Germany had been haunted by the fear of French revenge after 1870), not only insisted upon maintaining an army so large that she could in a short time put 2,000,000 men, fully equipped, into the field: she also entered into close relations,



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though not formal alliances, with Poland and Czecho-Slovakia, the neighbours of Germany on the east and south, and lent them officers to assist in the organization of their armies. The "Succession States," as they were called, which had obtained most of the territory of the old Austrian empire, fearing a revival on the part of crippled Hungary, formed a defensive alliance before the ink was dry upon the treaties : it was known as the Little Entente, and linked together Czecho-Slovakia, Roumania and Jugo-Slavia. Evidently the work of real pacification was by no means completed when the treaties were signed.

One remarkable result of the new distribution of territory, the full significance of which was scarcely realized at the time, was that it involved a great change in the balance of power among the European states, and markedly reduced the old preponderance of the Great Powers.

Before the war there had been six Great Powers in Europe, each with a population of more than 30 millions—Great Britain, France, Germany, Austro-Hungary, Italy, and Russia. Besides these, only Spain (with 20 millions) had a population above the 10 million mark. There were five states with populations between 5 and 10 millions, six with populations between 1 and 5 millions, and three with populations of less than a million.

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But after the redistribution of territory, the situation was profoundly changed. The Great Powers of Europe had shrunk from six to four, for Austro-Hungary had disappeared from the map, while Russia—for the time being, at any rate—had excluded herself from the comity of Europe. On the other hand, the secondary states, with populations of between 10 and 30 millions, had increased in number from one to five (Spain, Poland, Roumania, Czecho-Slovakia and Jugo-Slavia); the states of between 5 and 10 millions had increased from five to eight; and the states of between 1 and 5 millions had increased from six to eight. The total number of sovereign states in Europe had, in fact, risen from 22 to 29; and there was no longer such a gulf between the tritons and the minnows as there had been in the nineteenth century. This meant that the old-time domination of the Great Powers had come to an end; and this was reflected, as we have seen, in the constitution of the League of Nations.

An even more striking change arose from the fact that most of the organized states outside of Europe, from China to Peru, had realized that their fortunes were involved in the affairs of Europe, and by their participation in the war and in the peace conference had begun to play an active part in inter-



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national affairs. Even before the war, the United States and Japan had entered the ranks of the Great Powers. Since the war, more than twenty extra-European states have claimed a share in consultations about international affairs. Under the arbitrary but convenient classification by population which we have already used, two of these (China and India) dwarfed even the greatest of Great Powers, though for various reasons their weight did not yet count for much. There was one extra-European state (Brazil) which fell into the second class; nine fell into the third and eight into the fourth, the remainder being little states of negligible importance.

The significance of these facts was that they visibly portended the opening of a new era in international relations of which the foundation of the League of Nations was a sign. In place of a European dictatorship over the greater part of the world, wielded by a group of mutually suspicious Great Powers, the outlines were emerging of a world-system, in which Europe must count for less than it had done during the four preceding centuries, and in which the Great Powers, whether in Europe or outside, must reconcile themselves to a partnership and consultation with the rest.

### 5. *Changes Outside Europe*

The war either caused or greatly accelerated far-reaching changes in the world outside of Europe. But the most important of these changes took place indirectly and gradually, and were not reflected in the treaties; we shall try to discuss them in a later chapter. So far as the peace-settlement was concerned, the chief results were that Germany was deprived of all her colonies, which were divided among the victorious powers; and that Turkey lost the greater part of the Asiatic dominions which she had controlled since the sixteenth century, and a number of new quasi-national states, under the protection of Britain and France, were established in south-western Asia.

These transfers of territory were arranged among the victors themselves. But there was this difference from earlier transfers by conquest: that these new acquisitions were placed under mandates given in the name of the League of Nations, and their new masters submitted to the supervision of the League over their administration. Three different types of mandates were provided for. The first related to territories which might be expected, in course of time, to stand by themselves as independent states; such were the territories taken from the Turks. The



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second related to territories mainly inhabited by primitive peoples, who were likely to stand in need of tutelage for an indefinite period; such were the regions of tropical Africa. The third related to territories which might be expected to be incorporated on equal terms with the neighbouring states, such as South-West Africa, which will probably ultimately become a member of the Union of South Africa.

Subject to the terms of these mandates, the German Colonies were divided between France, Great Britain, the British Dominions, and Japan. France got the wide territory of Cameroon and the little colony of Togoland, which formed enclaves in her wide African empire; but the British colonies of Nigeria and the Gold Coast were rounded off by strips from these territories. Britain got the most valuable of all the German colonies, Tanganyika, which could be linked with the existing British colonies of Kenya, Uganda and Nyasaland in a great East African dominion; a strip of territory was also allotted to Belgium, to round off her vast dominion of Congoland. German New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago went to Australia; the German islands in the Southern Pacific were allotted to New Zealand, which had already taken over from Britain most of the islands in that ocean; while the German

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islands in the Northern Pacific, and the Chinese province of Kiao-chao, passed under the control of Japan. The acquisition of Kiao-chao, when added to a number of concessions which Japan had wrested from China during the war, promised to make Japan the controlling power in China. But this led to trouble, and large readjustments had to be made later.

These changes of ownership were, for the most part, no more significant than the frequent bargains by which the European powers had divided out Africa and the Pacific archipelagos among themselves during the generation before the war. The changes in the Turkish Empire were of far deeper significance. They represented an attempt to bring to an end the desolating Turkish supremacy which had for four centuries retarded the development of south-western Asia, and to emancipate the peoples who had so long been subject to the Turkish yoke. If the authors of the settlement had had their way, Turkey would have been reduced to an insignificant state in the central part of Asia Minor. Under the abortive Treaty of Sèvres, she was not only to have lost Constantinople and the Straits, and to have been finally excluded from Europe, she was to have lost also the western and most fertile part of Asia Minor, once one of the richest provinces of the Roman Empire,



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which was assigned to Greece; while the south-west corner of Asia Minor was to have gone to Italy, already (since 1911) mistress of Rhodes and the Dodecanese, and would have provided a useful field of colonization for the surplus population of Italy. It was intended, also, that Armenia, in the north-east of Asia Minor, should be withdrawn from Turkish rule and placed under the protection of a Western power, in order that the remnants of the much-suffering Armenian people, almost destroyed by repeated massacres, might have a chance of revival. But America, to which this burdensome and difficult responsibility was offered, refused to accept it. Then, led by Mustapha Kemal Pasha, the Turks showed a very vigorous revival. They drove the Greeks into the sea, menaced the British forces which were guarding the Dardanelles at Chanak, tore up the Treaty of Sèvres, and wrung from the unwilling dictators of Europe, at *Lausanne* (1923), a revised treaty which left to them the whole of Asia Minor and a foothold in Europe.

But all the rest of the Turkish Empire passed, probably for ever, out of Turkish control. Egypt, over which, until the outbreak of war, the Sultan of Turkey had claimed a nominal suzerainty, had been declared a British protectorate in 1914; and although the Egyptians were claiming inde-

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pendence, which was soon to be ceded to them, the Peace settlement recognized Egypt as part of the British Empire. The Arabs of Arabia proper, and the Bedouins of the Syrian desert, had never willingly accepted Turkish rule, and had been largely left to themselves. They had revolted during the war. Led by the Sultan of Hedjaz, and inspired by the romantic Colonel Lawrence, they had played an important part in the campaigns whereby the Turk was driven out of Syria in the last stages of the war; while the concurrent British campaign in Mesopotamia had also expelled him from that most ancient of lands. All this wide region, therefore, including Syria, Mesopotamia and Arabia, awaited reorganization; and five new states were set up within it.

(1) Northern Syria, under a mandate, was assigned to France. It was an area which had once been very rich and prosperous; it included ancient Antioch and Aleppo, ancient Tyre and modern Beyrout. The intention of the mandate was that it should be trained to self-government.

(2) The little sacred land of Palestine was set aside as a Jewish national home, under a British protectorate, with a mandate from the League: the task of adjusting the claims of Jewish immigrants to a neglected land with those of the Arabs who had long occupied it



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was no easy one. Many aspects of the Peace settlement, such as the reconstitution of Poland and the revival of the old traditions of Bohemia, had attempted to undo old wrongs and revive ancient memories; but none of these attempts was more romantic than the scheme of bringing back a Jewish population to its traditional home of two thousand years ago.

(3) A new kingdom of Iraq was established, under a British protectorate with a League mandate, in the ancient land of Mesopotamia, the land of Ur of the Chaldees and Babylon and Nineveh. A son of the Sultan of Hedjaz was brought to rule over it. Whether, after so many centuries of neglect, a living civilization could be revived in civilization's earliest home, depended upon whether a stable system of government could be established.

(4) Another British protectorate was set up in the desert land east of the Jordan, under the name of Transjordan, with a second ruler drawn from the Arab house of Hedjaz.

(5) Finally, the huge mass of Arabia, mostly desert, was in effect left to itself, at first under the nominal rule of the Sultan of Hedjaz, which was not to last long.

This attempt to lay the foundations of a new group of states in the Mohammedan homeland of south-western Asia, and to undo

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the long-standing desolation which had resulted from the conquests of the Turks, was one of the most interesting features of the Peace settlement. It promised to the Mohammedan world a chance of reconstructing itself, and playing its part in the modern world. In that sense it went back upon the process which had been at work during the nineteenth century, whereby most of the Mohammedan peoples had been brought under the direct control of the Western imperialist peoples. Time alone can show whether it will be successful.



## CHAPTER III

### THE PROGRESS OF DEMOCRACY

#### 1. *Dreams of a Millennium*

IMPORTANT as they were, the changes which were made or endorsed by the peace treaties were less important than other changes, brought about by the war, which found no place in the treaties. For the war either caused, or greatly accelerated, profound changes in the internal structure of every people. Everywhere it destroyed, or greatly weakened, the traditional ascendancy of the old ruling classes. Everywhere it brought about a loud demand for a new social order, which should yield greater social equality, and give to the mass of working folk a larger share of the wealth which they helped to create, and the chance of a fuller life. The heaviest burden of the war had fallen upon the young manhood of all the belligerent nations, who, on a scale never before known in history, had been torn from

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their ordinary occupations, and forced to endure the long misery of the trenches. There had never before been such an uprooting of habits, such a general forced departure from the ruts in which most men's lives run quietly. The manhood of the nations came back glad, no doubt, to return to the old ways ; but a vast number of them had lost the habit of taking things for granted, were ready to claim a recompense for what they had suffered, and returned with a vague resolve that the political system which seemed to have produced these miseries, and the social system which made the mass of men mere tools in the hands of their masters, should be replaced by something better. Women, also, had been shaken out of their old ways of life by the war. While the men were in the trenches, they had perforce taken up many activities previously reserved for men. They had rendered indispensable services. They had lived a free life, no longer tied by old conventions. They claimed the rights of equal citizenship ; and this claim promised a political and a social revolution of the most far-reaching kind, of which, perhaps, we have as yet seen only the beginnings.

All these profound changes in the social and political structure of the Western peoples had, of course, been at work already before the war ; but they were immensely accel-



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erated by the war. They found expression in three ways: (1) In most of the states of Europe they led to the rapid establishment of complete democracy in the political sphere. (2) In one country, Russia, they led to a bold and desperate attempt at a complete social revolution, and in all countries they led to large social changes which brought about significant alterations in the general standards of living, and in the distribution of wealth between classes. (3) But since these changes were attempted at a time when the whole world had been seriously impoverished and disorganized, they led to a good deal of disappointment and confusion, which produced a sense of disillusionment, and (in some countries) a reaction against democracy. Democracy, as a form of government, and as a means for the making of a better world, was on its trial in the years after the war; and it cannot yet be confidently claimed that it has stood the test.

### 2. *The Establishment of Complete Democracy*

The most striking sign of change, in the political sphere, was the sudden downfall of great ruling dynasties. The three ruling houses which had for centuries dominated Eastern Europe—the Habsburgs of Austria, the Hohenzollerns of Prussia, and the Romanovs of Russia—all disappeared, almost

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simultaneously. With them went all the petty princes of Germany, who had supplied brides for the reigning families of most of Europe ; Greece also abolished its monarchy. It is true that royalty survived in a dozen European countries. But the kings of these countries were constitutional monarchs of the British pattern—crowned Presidents of democratic republics, who reigned without ruling, and were content to leave the responsibility of government to ministers controlled (at any rate in theory) by parliaments. The great majority of the European states, including France, Germany, and all the new states, had now become, in name as well as in fact, democratic republics.

A second sign of the change was that in every country where it did not already exist, a complete democratic franchise, without any property qualification, was established. All the new states set up complete democracy as a matter of course. In some states, indeed, the franchise was still limited to men : this was the case in France, Belgium, Switzerland, Portugal, Jugo-Slavia, Greece and Hungary. But in the great majority of states the franchise was conferred upon women on equal terms with men. The emancipation of women, long delayed, came with a rush after, and because of, the war. It is significant that Great Britain, which was the parent of



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representative institutions in the world, was among the last states to establish complete democracy. It was only completed, in two stages, by the Acts of 1918 and 1928.

The characteristic form of government in most of the states of Western civilization was now that in which ultimate power rests with the whole adult population. And, almost everywhere, this power was exercised through machinery modelled on that of Britain—a Cabinet of ministers jointly and severally responsible to a representative Parliament. The full significance of this revolution can only be appreciated when it is remembered that, a hundred years earlier, there were only three European states which possessed any kind of representative institutions, and in these three the Parliaments were merely the organs of a small governing class. It has only been since 1850, and mainly since 1870, that any real advance towards representative democracy has taken place, and it has only been since the war that it has become either general or complete. In other words, democracy in Europe, and even in Britain, is, in any form, little more than sixty years old. In its complete form, it is less than ten years old. As a form of government, and as a means of realizing the ideal which inspires it, it is still on its trial.

A third feature of the political transforma-

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tion which has taken place in Europe is that, either during or since the war, the great majority of states have adopted the method of election known as "proportional representation." Britain and France are the only important countries in Europe which have, as yet, not adopted this system in some form; and there are many indications that France will adopt it before long. The objects of the system are (1) to ensure that every solid body of opinion in the country is fairly represented in proportion to its strength, and therefore to make representative government a reality; (2) to guard against the exercise of irresponsible power by a minority: under other systems, such as that which exists in Britain, a well-organized minority can, and often does, obtain a sweeping majority in Parliament on a minority vote, and may use its power to carry measures which, in the opinion of the majority, would do irreparable damage; (3) to guard against the danger of giving control to a narrow margin of wavering and often unthinking electors who can be swung this way or that by panics, promises or electioneering stunts, who often decide the results of elections in the British system, and to whom therefore politicians are apt to make their chief appeal, with unfortunate results; (4) to avoid the violent oscillations of policy which are apt to result when



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big majorities are given alternately to parties of widely different views. Under Proportional Representation there is usually a balance of parties, and no one party can dictate its will ; statesmen are therefore forced to aim at a compromise which will represent the greatest common measure of national agreement, and from this follows a real continuity of policy. Those who object to Proportional Representation contend that it must lead to frequent changes of government, and therefore to instability. Rather than run this risk, they think it better that one group of men, backed by a strong Party, should have full authority to carry out their policy, and to use Parliament as an instrument, controlling it by means of their automatic majority, instead of being controlled by it. The same view—that one party ought to be clothed with complete authority, and to be put into a position to override all others—is held by the Bolsheviks of Russia and the Fascists of Italy, with this difference, that the Bolsheviks and the Fascists insist that the authority of the ruling party should be permanent in order to secure continuity of policy ; whereas the advocates of parliamentary government without proportional representation hold that violent periodical oscillations between strongly opposed points of view provide the best means of expressing the will of a demo-

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cratic people. The advocates of Proportional Representation, on the other hand, contend that democracy ought to mean government by a process of reasonable adjustment and compromise between different points of view, and that every definite body of opinion ought to be able to contribute its share to the settlement of national problems. Almost the whole of Europe has accepted this view. Britain and France still stand out against it. Italy accepted it in 1919, but after a period of confusion swung into the violent reaction of Fascism in 1922. Spain, Greece, Portugal and Jugo-Slavia take the same line as Britain and France. In these four states the resentments aroused by the misuse of power by dominant parties have led either to revolution or to the establishment of dictatorships.

Meanwhile, Russia has completely repudiated the whole system of parliamentary democracy. The Bolsheviks of Russia, who seized power in 1917, regard democracy as a mere sham, a device of the hated "bourgeoisie," a mask to conceal the tyranny of capitalism. They have substituted for it what is called "the dictatorship of the proletariat"—meaning by the "proletariat" those who own no property but earn their livelihood by the work of their hands. In theory the "proletariat" exercises its dictatorship through an immense number of



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“soviets,” or group-councils of workers. In practice, however, the soviets have to do what they are told, and the reality of power lies in the hands of a small and highly disciplined Communist Party, who form a minute proportion of the whole population. The members of the party, who will be thrown out and perhaps destroyed if they show the least sign of indiscipline, fill all the offices of State, control all property and all industrial activities, and enforce their will by means of an army which is ruthlessly employed to crush out any symptom of resistance. Freedom of speech and freedom of the press have been completely suppressed; an elaborate spy-system makes even whispered opposition dangerous. Through their control of all newspapers and books, and of all universities and schools, and by the silencing of all agencies (such as churches) which preach any doctrines, or uphold any earthly or heavenly authority, other than their own, the ruling group aim at moulding the whole mind of the nation into a single pattern. By this means they hope, in time, to establish a social order from which the evils of private initiative and private ownership will be utterly banished, but which will produce enough wealth to make all its members comfortable. By some this system has been defended as the only logical means of achieving the aim of demo-

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cracy. But its leaders are right in claiming that it is the very antithesis of democracy, the essence of which is an assertion of the value of all human personalities, and their equal right to express themselves in their own way, and to take part in the determination of the common destiny, so long as they do not override or invade the corresponding rights of other personalities.

The strange phenomenon of Bolshevism was due to the violence of the reaction which followed the sudden collapse of the corrupt and incompetent Russian despotism and its bureaucracy, in the crisis of the war. When Tsarism fell, an attempt was made to set up a democratic system in its place. But it is always difficult to make democracy work well. Amid the confusion and despair of a great national defeat, the attempt was foredoomed to failure, especially in a vast country whose immense population was mostly illiterate, and had no experience in self-government. The chaos which followed gave their chance to the knot of able, resolute and ruthless men who led the small Bolshevik or Communist party. They turned the vengeance of the bewildered, panic-struck, illiterate mass against the educated class or "bourgeoisie," which was almost obliterated; thus the possible leaders of opposition were swept out of the way. They enlisted the



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patriotism of the Russian people against foreign invaders and domestic rebels, and displayed great energy and a real degree of military skill in overcoming these dangers. Then, having secured control over all the resources of a ruined but still vast and rich empire, they proceeded to organize the most perfect system of tyranny of which there is any record, and to use it for the purpose of realizing their dream of a Communist state. Russia has rejected democracy, but not after any clear discussion or experiment. She has been forced to reject it without having ever learnt what it means.

By a different route, Italy has reached a conclusion very similar to that of Russia. Since the seizure of power by Mussolini and the Fascists in 1922, she has abandoned parliamentary democracy as a sham and a fraud, and has fallen back upon autocracy, wielded by the leader of a disciplined party. The aim of Mussolini is different from that of the Bolsheviks. His purpose is to develop the unity, strength and national pride of Italy; and his regime is the most extravagant expression of nationalism that the modern world has seen. In order to achieve unity and strength, he holds it to be necessary to suppress all differences of opinion. Freedom of speech and of the press have been as completely suppressed as in Russia; and the

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methods of espionage and of summary condemnation without trial are almost as unflinchingly used. Since (unlike the Bolsheviks, whose eyes are fixed wholly on the future) Mussolini lays great stress upon the historic past of Italy, and loves to fortify his theory by appeals to Caesar and to Machiavelli, he has preserved the Crown as a figure-head. He has also kept in existence a sort of Parliament. But as (in his view) Parliament is of no use if it expresses the differences that exist in the nation, he has devised a method of election which ensures that its members shall be loyal Fascists. By concentrating all authority in his own person, he has unquestionably achieved a greater efficiency in many material things: every traveller in Italy observes with admiration that the trains now run punctually. In the subordination of all individual and class interests to the glory and strength of the State, he reproduces the spirit, and often very nearly the words, of Kaiser Wilhelm II in pre-war Germany. Like him, he is fond of rattling the sabre; and if it were not that the economic troubles of Italy are very serious, and that her resources are limited, he would be as great a menace to the peace of Europe as Wilhelm II was in the years before the war.

These two violent reactions against the



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democratic regime which the rest of Europe has accepted do not stand alone. In Spain, in Greece, in Jugo-Slavia, in Poland, in Lithuania, there have been temporary resorts to dictatorship and military control as a means of escape from the confusions caused by inefficient democratic government. But in all these cases the plea for autocracy has been that it was necessary as a temporary restorative measure ; and they have, in fact, been temporary. Only Bolshevism and Fascism have utterly repudiated the whole system of parliamentary democracy, on the ground that it is incapable of attaining the ends which a civilized state ought to set before itself. They differ profoundly as to the definition of these ends ; but in each case they claim that one party has a monopoly of wisdom and understanding, and is thereby justified in assuming the powers of dictatorship. They repudiate democracy precisely because democracy rests upon the assumption that no one class or school or party has a monopoly of wisdom ; and that, for the national well-being, all ought to be enabled to make their contribution to a process of free discussion whereby the course of national development shall be decided.

Nevertheless, the existence of all these protests and reactions while the general current is setting strongly in the opposite direction

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provides evidence of the existence of misgivings and disillusion about the working of democracy. This disillusion is to be seen, in less violent forms, in every country. It arises from the fact that the world has been making very slow progress towards peace and the recovery of prosperity; and still more from the fact that the millennial expectations of a new and finer social order which were widely entertained at the end of the war have been generally disappointed. The world does not seem to be a better place to live in, but, for many millions in almost every country, a worse place to live in, than it was before the war, in spite of all the oceans of talk that are poured forth in innumerable Parliaments.

### 3. *Social Changes : Russia, Germany, Britain*

When the war ended, and new democratic governments were set up, there were in almost every country high hopes of immense social reforms. Almost everywhere Labour and Socialist parties grew to great strength, and put before excited and hopeful peoples rosy and Utopian programmes of advance, such as that contained, for this country, in the glowing pamphlet entitled "Labour and the New Social Order." Everywhere these hopes were disappointed, because they had been



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conceived without much regard to the hard facts of the economic situation.

The world had been engaged for four years in squandering its accumulated wealth at a prodigious rate ; it had been living on capital, and this process could not continue. Meanwhile, because the European countries were compelled to devote all their strength to war-work, many of the countries outside of Europe which had been accustomed to purchase their requirements from the European countries had learnt to make them for themselves ; and although in many cases they could not make them so cheaply or so well, they resolved to keep their new industries in being, at the expense of their own people, by raising high tariffs. The new European countries, inspired by the nationalist desire for self-sufficiency, followed the same course. The result was that the flow of international trade was gravely impeded : there was a serious restriction of the wealth which arises from exchanging the goods that you can make best and most cheaply for the goods that other people can make best and most cheaply. Finally, all the European peoples were burdened and crippled by the load of debt which they had raised during the war, and their trading relations were further disorganized by the necessity of paying heavy debts to one another, which could only be

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paid in goods. From all these causes, Britain suffered more seriously than any other country, because she was more dependent than any other country upon foreign trade; and because, by financing her allies, she had accumulated a heavier debt than any other country.

What has been written in the foregoing paragraph is an invasion of the subject-matter of another volume in this series, Professor Bowley's *Economic Consequences of the War*. But it is necessary to touch upon it because it helps to explain the disillusionment which followed the war, and the long period of bad trade and unemployment which came instead of the new world for which men had hoped. So long as those who preached these glowing visions were out of office, it was possible for them to say and believe that it was the fault of the rulers that the dreams did not come true. But whenever they were given the opportunity of dealing with the problem, they found the facts too hard for them, and either did little or nothing, or brought ruin upon their country.

It is not possible to describe here all the efforts and experiments that were made in the post-war years in many countries of Europe. It will be sufficient to summarize, very briefly, the experience of three great countries, Russia, Germany and Britain.



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### *Russia*

In Russia the Bolshevik group, led by Lenin, being unhampered by any opposition or criticism, were able to carry out in full the programme of their Communist creed. They repudiated all the debts owed by Russia and by all Russian trading concerns to all foreign creditors. They expropriated all capital—factories, ships, mines, land. They not only beggared, but in a multitude of cases slaughtered, those who had previously owned property of any kind. Freed thus from the whole burden of interest-charges, they proceeded to try to work the industrial system as a communal concern.

On the theory that the poverty of the mass was due to their being robbed of the proceeds of their labour by the tribute exacted by owners of capital, they ought to have been able to ensure well-being to the population. But they found that the conduct of industry demands the constant supply of a stream of new capital, and that new capital cannot be got unless people are encouraged to save by the prospect of receiving interest for the use of their savings. They found that efficiency is hard to attain when the conductors of industry are no longer impelled by the fear of incurring loss and the desire of obtaining gain. They found that the workers, instead

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of being stimulated to greater energy by the fact that they were now working for the community, were so much inclined to take things easily that ere long it became necessary for a time to introduce a system of forced labour, much more tyrannical than the old system had known. They found that Russia needed to sell abroad the surplus products of her fields, and to buy abroad the machinery and other equipment which she needed, and that foreign trade was almost impossible for a people who had repudiated all their obligations. Instead of an equality of prosperity, an equality of misery and starvation, worse than the old regime had ever produced, was the outcome of their methods.

Things only began to mend when in 1921 Lenin partly reversed his policy, and made some sort of terms with capitalism. Even so, in spite of the annihilation of the well-to-do classes, the repudiation of all debts, and the confiscation of all capital, it took years to bring back the average rate of wages to three-quarters of the low levels at which they had stood under the old Tsarist regime; there were myriads of unemployed workers, and the rich plains were going out of cultivation because the peasants refused to labour upon the production of crops which would be taken from them. The experiment of suddenly trying to carry out the full Social-



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ist gospel did not work. And the Socialists of other countries, anxious though they were to think well of the Russian experiment, learnt from it that theories which may look well on paper may assume a very different aspect when they are translated into fact. The enthusiasm for the Russian method, which was widespread in Europe during the first years after the war, and produced imitators in Hungary, Bulgaria and Germany, rapidly cooled down, and the most ardent began to talk about "the inevitability of gradualness."

### *Germany*

In Germany the revolution which followed the end of the war, and which suddenly and completely overthrew the old order, gave a preponderance of power into the hands of the Socialists. The first President and the first Chancellor of the new German Republic were Socialists. A new constitution had to be drawn up. With the nation in a condition of despair and almost of dissolution, full of anger against the old order which had brought about this disaster, it might have been expected that the opportunity would have been seized of establishing the Socialist Commonwealth which had been advocated with so much ardour for seventy years. But no such attempt was even contemplated. Those

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who advocated it—Spartacists and Minority Socialists—were firmly repressed. And the admirably drawn constitution, when completed, was found to be essentially a Liberal document, which did not even look towards the establishment of a Socialist Commonwealth.

It guaranteed freedom of the person, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of worship, freedom of association, equal eligibility of all citizens for public office, and all the other liberties which Bolshevik Russia and Fascist Italy have found it necessary to deny. It proclaimed economic freedom for each individual. It guaranteed property, except when expropriated by law and after the payment of just compensation. It guaranteed the inheritance of property. The only approach to Socialism, as ordinarily understood, was that the State was empowered, by legal enactment and on payment of compensation, "to transfer to public ownership private businesses suitable for socialization"; but this is a right which every state has always been assumed to possess and has constantly exercised, as when the British state acquired the telephones or the broadcasting system, or British towns acquired tramway systems or gas works. It also empowered the State to compel the amalgamation of various concerns "on the basis of



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autonomous administration," and thus gave the state a share in the process which it is fashionable to call "rationalization," but without assigning to it any powers of control over the businesses thus amalgamated.

The one novel provision of a social kind in the Constitution was the establishment of a whole hierarchy of councils for employers and workers, starting with a Works Council in every factory, and passing through a series of district councils to a National Economic Council, which was to be empowered to consider all proposed legislation upon economic subjects. But there was in all this nothing that could strictly be called Socialism ; only an extension into the economic sphere, in a very tentative way, of the methods of political democracy.

In the actual work of government, the new regime in Germany acted with equal moderation, declining the attempt to create a complete new social order. It did not use even the moderate powers which the constitution gave it to take over private businesses ; on the contrary, it actually transferred to private ownership some mines which had been owned by the State. But it did make use of the power of enforcing amalgamations ; and by doing so, helped to create a small class of great industrial magnates who became the greatest power in the state.

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Throughout the post-war years, indeed, the German Government was necessarily mainly preoccupied in meeting the immense and indefinite financial obligations imposed upon it by the treaty. This was, indirectly, the cause of the biggest social change which has taken place since the war. The struggle to pay reparations produced a depreciation of the currency. When the French occupied the Ruhr in 1923, the depreciation rapidly became a complete collapse. The old mark lost all value, and a new currency based upon gold had to be established. The result was that all liabilities payable in marks, including all fixed-interest securities and the whole of the national debt, were in effect extinguished, as completely as by a repudiation like that of Russia. This brought a direct relief to the German treasury. It almost extinguished the old *rentier* class—a social change of profound importance. But as the *rentier* class formed the main source of savings for the creation of fresh capital, Germany was thereby for a time severely crippled, and compelled to depend upon loans, mainly from America. This purely economic and financial series of events had also a profound social and political effect: the downfall of the *rentiers* was equivalent to a social revolution. But this revolution had not been brought about deliberately, as a measure of



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social reconstruction : it was an indirect consequence of the war penalties.

The new German democracy was put to a very severe test. It had to build up again, in face of immense difficulties, an order that seemed to be crumbling. It had to submit to humiliations that were very bitter to a proud people, and to accept responsibility for them. On the whole, it steered Germany successfully through an extremely difficult period. In spite of frequent changes of government, it succeeded in achieving a real continuity of sane and moderate policy—perhaps because its electoral system forbade violent oscillations between extremes, and forced the politicians to seek the greatest common measure of national agreement. There was naturally a great deal of disillusionment, sometimes amounting even to despair. There were moments of crucial difficulty. But, on the whole, the new democracy justified itself, steering a steady course between reaction on the one side and revolution on the other.

### *Britain*

In Britain, as in other countries, the social consequences of the war were profound. War conditions had brought an unexampled prosperity to the working-class, whose standards of life were greatly improved. When

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the war ended, this improvement was largely maintained : it has not been lost even after ten years of profound trade depression. But, since the country was definitely poorer, this meant that there had to be a substantial redistribution of wealth between classes. This redistribution was, in fact, brought about largely through taxation, the main burden of which, to an extent unparalleled in other countries, was thrown upon the well-to-do.

On the political side, the most striking result of the war period was an immense increase in the numbers and power of the Trade Unions : their membership increased from two millions on the eve of the war to six and a half millions in 1920. The political Labour Party, also, which had been inconsiderable before the war, had now definitely become the second party in the State, and it was drawing to itself much enthusiastic support by the large visions of a new social order which it propounded. In 1918, however, its real strength had not yet been revealed. In the Parliament of 1918-22, unlimited power was wielded by a coalition government of Liberals and Conservatives ; it had an overwhelming majority of 3 to 1 in Parliament, although it had received only 52 per cent. of the votes of the electors.

The Government was well aware of the



large hopes of social reconstruction which were abroad. The Prime Minister, Mr. Lloyd George, had proclaimed that it was the duty of the country, by a united effort, "to make England a land fit for heroes to live in"; and an immense programme of reconstruction was launched. It did not satisfy the hopes of the enthusiast. Throughout these years there was incessant Labour unrest, and the Trade Unions, irritated by the impotence of their party in Parliament, more than once threatened "direct action" through a general stoppage of work.

Yet the work undertaken by the Government was vigorous and many-sided: no subsequent government has shown a fraction of its energy in the field of social reorganization. It assumed for the first time the obligation of housing the people, and initiated a vast and costly housing scheme. It passed an Education Act which promised an immense extension of the facilities for popular education. It brought about a great amalgamation of the railways—the only instance, in Britain, in which the State has taken a hand in the work of rationalization. It created a Ministry of Transport to make plans for a complete reconstruction of the road-system. It proposed a reorganization of the mining industry by the public acquisition of royalties, and the establishment of a hierarchy of joint bodies

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of employers and workers rising from pit committees to a national mining board ; the miners refused to accept this scheme, because they would not be content with anything short of nationalization. It summoned a national industrial conference to make plans for industrial reforms. It set up Trade Boards for the fixation of wage rates in a multitude of industries, and strove to establish joint industrial councils in the rest. It extended the system of Unemployment Insurance to the whole range of industry. When the long depression in trade began in 1921, it still further extended this system to meet the urgent need, and worked out schemes (Trade Facilities and Export Credits) for the assistance of industry.

This was a very vigorous beginning in the work of national reorganization. But the government which was responsible for it was denounced as unimaginative and reactionary. It fell from power in 1922. Then followed a period of changing governments—two Conservative and two Labour—during the whole of which trade continued to be bad, and the figures of unemployment never sank below a million. It was a time of national crisis. There were many debates in Parliament on unemployment and the state of trade, but nothing seemed to result from them. Even the Labour Governments had no definite



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ideas to propound. Both of the Labour Governments, it is true, held office without a clear majority ; but that seemed to many of their supporters to afford no strong reason why they should not lay their proposals, if they had any, before the country. The difficulties of course, were very great ; and, without doubt, the successive ministries did their best to find some solution for them. They found none : perhaps none was to be found. The burden of maintaining the unemployed in enforced idleness was a heavy one. The load of taxation was increased year by year. The staple trades of the country sank into progressive decline. In 1926 an abortive General Strike showed that direct industrial action was worse than useless. A growing apathy, and a spirit of defeatism, began to spread through the nation. It showed itself especially in the deadness of political life. As one debate followed another in Parliament, and each party in turn denounced the other for its failure to find any effective means of tackling the national problems, the electorate began to lose confidence in Parliament as an instrument for achieving well-being. This may turn out to have been an evanescent and temporary phenomenon. Things may come right of themselves, and all be well again. But, in the meanwhile, there is no doubt that in

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post-war Britain, as in other countries, there has been a growing dissatisfaction with the working of parliamentary democracy.

### 4. *The Decay of Parliamentary Government*

We have, then, this curious position as a result of the great changes which the war has caused or accelerated: that almost everywhere in Europe complete democracy working through representative Parliaments has been established, while there is a demand for the establishment of this system (as we shall see) in the countries where it has not yet been instituted; but that, at the same time, there has been a vehement repudiation of the whole system, and of the ideas of liberty on which it rests, in two of the greatest countries of Europe, and in many of the others a real (though not yet serious) decline of confidence in the capacity of the parliamentary system to tackle the immense, complex and variegated problems that face us in the post-war era.

Does this mean that there is something inherently defective in the parliamentary system, or only that it is temporarily overstrained by the demands of a very difficult time? This question cannot be answered fully without an analysis of the conditions in many countries, for which there is no space here. But a brief analysis of the working of



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the system in Britain may not be out of place.

(1) The root difficulty arises from the apathy and indifference of the sovereign electorate, who mostly awaken to an interest in politics only during the excitement of an election, if even then. This apathy is due to a number of causes. A single vote counts for so little among 28,000,000 that the use of it is apt to be lightly regarded. In any case, under the British system (though not under Proportional Representation) any vote not given to a winner might as well not be cast at all; it counts for nothing. Very often the elector has no chance of voting for anybody who represents his opinions and whom he can respect: his franchise is often limited to a choice between two candidates both of whom may seem to him undesirable; and if he votes for either, he tells a lie with his vote. The means of political education are inadequate, because the popular press does not treat politics seriously, and the propaganda of the political parties does not reach a tithe of the electors who have to make decisions. Finally, there is a widespread idea that politicians are insincere, and that politics is just a game. It is an idea which has grown, because (in the British system of voting) politicians cannot depend exclusively upon the support of those who share their opinions:

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the difference between success and annihilation may depend upon capturing a few wavering votes, to be got by a light-hearted pledge which may never have to be fulfilled.

(2) The proceedings of Parliament are felt to be unreal; the results of its debates are foregone conclusions, and seldom make much difference. This is especially the case when the Government has a majority; but it is generally the case also when the Government has no majority, because it is held to have the power of claiming a dissolution, and bringing Parliament to an end, if Parliament dares to differ from it upon any matter of importance. In truth, Parliament has no real control over the making of laws, or the expenditure of money, or the conduct of administration. All important laws are prepared by the Government, which only accepts such amendments as it sees fit; the strongest opposition has no chance of introducing a Bill with any prospect of having it discussed. Parliament has no control over administration, because if it challenges any administrative act of importance, the Government majority will be turned on to support it, and it will be known that the Government will resign, and there will be a general election, if it is defeated. Finally, Parliament has no control over expenditure, because the estimates



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of expenditure are submitted by the Government, and everybody knows that it will resign if it is defeated on any material point. In actual fact, Parliament has not dared to reduce any estimate for about a generation. In short, Parliament has been reduced, by the power of the Government, to little more than a sort of debating-society; and its debates are chiefly important because they may affect public opinion, and therefore influence the next general election. Even if Parliament had real power, and dared to use it, its business is so arranged, and its available time and resources of ability are so wasted, that it cannot possibly deal with the enormous mass of varied business which in theory it has to transact. Every year hundreds of millions of pounds are voted without the least examination or discussion.

(3) All the power which Parliament is supposed to possess, but has really lost, has been seized by the Cabinet, a little group of twenty or so men, not always of very great ability, selected by the Party leader who has managed to obtain a majority in the gamble of a general election. But twenty men, even if they were all supermen, cannot possibly exercise all the power they have assumed. They cannot discuss all the details of all Bills (forty or so every year, on a great variety of subjects), and effectively control the work of

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the immense departments of state, and check and control an income and expenditure of £800,000,000 a year, besides dealing with all the complex and difficult problems that come before them from day to day. But though they cannot deal with all this vitally important work, they will not allow Parliament to take any effective part in it, nor could Parliament do so without great changes in its methods. The result is that the reality of power falls into the hands of the permanent officials, or bureaucracy, whose true business should be, not to deal with new problems, but rather to keep the machine running in the accustomed way.

If this description is anywhere near the truth—and it is not much exaggerated—we need not be surprised that Parliament is not an efficient body for dealing with the great, complicated and novel problems which are crowding upon us in the post-war era; nor need we be surprised that its prestige and influence are declining. The undermining of Parliament was not directly caused by the war. But the very difficult problems which the war created have tested it, and brought its weaknesses to light; while, at the same time, the completion of democracy, which followed the war, has made it much more difficult for the still, small voice of reason to make itself heard, so vast are the crowds to



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which it has to speak ; and has made the trumpeting of unrealizable promises or of unreasonable panics the most effective way of winning votes.

## CHAPTER IV

### EUROPE AND THE NON-EUROPEAN WORLD

#### 1. *Changing Relationships*

IN the generation before the war the European nations had partitioned among themselves almost all that remained unconquered of the non-European world, except Persia, the Turkish Empire and China; and in Persia and China they had marked out "spheres of influence." Western civilization seemed to have mastered the globe. The products of its factories were universally used; the traffic of its merchants penetrated to the remotest lands, and turned their produce into the materials for its industry; its principal languages, especially English, were becoming the universal media of communication; its costumes and amusements were being imitated everywhere; its methods of administration and of justice had either been imposed upon or imitated by all the non-European peoples; young men from



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every region of the earth were finding their way to its universities to learn the secrets of its science, and centres of European learning were springing up in the ancient lands of China and India and among the primitive peoples of Africa ; while the military superiority of the European peoples, which sprang from their discipline and their scientific methods of slaughter, was everywhere acknowledged : a handful of European troops could keep half a continent in subjection. Europe had imposed not only its power, but its spell, upon all the non-European peoples in the world.

This ascendancy perhaps reached its apogee in the last decade of the nineteenth century, when European imperialism was most confident and vigorous. In the early years of the twentieth century it received something of a setback. The Boxer Rebellion in China (1900) was the first check to the conquering ambitions of the European nations. The Anglo-Japanese alliance of 1902 was the first recognition of a non-European people on equal terms, and it definitely put a stop to the partition of China. The Russo-Japanese war of 1905 presented to the world the thrilling spectacle of one of the greatest of European powers undergoing decisive defeat at the hands of an Asiatic people. Throughout Asia this event produced a profound

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effect. It broke the spell of European superiority. In many lands, and most notably in India, it awoke a new spirit, and gave birth to a claim of equality.

Nevertheless, what may be called the spiritual ascendancy of Europe was not shaken. What the peoples of India, of China, of Egypt now began to claim was, not that they should be left to follow their own ancient ways of life, but that they should be free to reorganize themselves on the European model, as Japan had done. They claimed the rights of nationality; but the very idea of nationality was a European conception, which had never existed in the Eastern world. They demanded representative self-government, a European method of organization. They were eager to make themselves independent of the products of European factories; but only by imitating the European methods of production. They asserted their intellectual equality, but it was by the methods of European science, and by studies mainly pursued in the European languages, that they demonstrated their equality.

There was a ferment of unrest working throughout the Oriental world in the ten years before the war. The Young Turk Movement, which was to revolutionize the life of Turkey, began in 1908. Serious unrest



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in India may be dated from 1907. The Chinese Revolution, which overthrew the ancient power of the Manchu Emperors as a preliminary to the reorganization of China as a modernist republic on Western lines, began in 1911. The Nationalist Movement in Egypt was giving trouble before the war, and Lord Kitchener had been sent to deal with it.

The war gave an immense stimulus to all these movements. On the one hand, the frequent assertions of the Allies that they were fighting for democracy and for the right of self-determination made it difficult to deny the claims of the subject peoples. On the other hand, the war gravely weakened the prestige of the European peoples. Was this orgy of slaughter the outcome of the civilization of the West? If so, that civilization could not deserve the submissive admiration which it seemed to claim. The ruling peoples of the West were wasting their manhood and their substance in internecine conflict: it might be hoped that their domination would thereby be undermined. They were concentrating all their strength upon war, and were perforce neglecting the industrial activities by means of which, chiefly, they had dominated the world: this gave to the other peoples, their subjects, the chance of building up industries of their own and of showing

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that they were in this field the equals of their masters. Finally, when peace came to be made, the non-European peoples had to be called into council, as equals, and not merely as subjects; and they took their place at the council-table of the League of Nations.

In all these ways the war seriously undermined the ascendancy of the Western peoples. It was inevitable that in the years that followed there should be an assertion of equality, a claim that national freedom and democratic self-government should be extended from Europe to the rest of the world, a revolt against "imperialism." A new system of relationship clearly had to be established between Europe and the non-European world, or, at any rate, those parts of it which were sufficiently civilized to be able to claim liberty. We have as yet seen only the beginning of the consequences which must flow from this change of attitude. But we have seen enough to know that they will raise problems of extreme difficulty. It is impossible here to attempt a detailed study of the changes that have taken place outside Europe since the war. It must suffice to survey very briefly three main fields—the Mohammedan world, India, and China.



2. *The Mohammedan World : The Ottoman Empire*

No part of the world, not even Europe, has been more profoundly affected by the war and its consequences than the realm of Islam—that broad belt, stretching across northern Africa and south-western Asia, from the Atlantic to the frontiers of India, in which the whole population is predominantly Moslem, and has been so ever since the amazing conquests of Islam in the seventh century. There are many millions of Moslems outside this belt, in India, in the Malay Archipelago, in Central Asia, in China ; but they are, mostly, scattered among peoples of other faiths. The region we have described is the true realm of Islam ; and in this region the war has produced effects of the most profound importance, which amount to a shattering of the whole Islamic system.

It was a fundamental element of the Islamic theory of life that all followers of the prophet were members of one society, under the authority—secular as well as spiritual—of the prophet's successor, the Caliph. True that one great Moslem sect, that of the Shiites, mostly to be found in Persia, held that there had been no legitimate Caliph since Ali, Mohammed's nephew ; true, also, that in the orthodox or Sunni lands there

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had often been rival caliphs. But this did not affect the doctrine of the oneness of Islam, as a supra-national society which has never recognized national distinctions.

Ever since the great conquests of the Ottoman Turks in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Turkish Sultan had provided an effective head for Islam, though the Arabs (among whom Islam took its birth) never submitted willingly to Turkish rule. At its height, the Turkish Empire included the whole realm of Islam, west of Persia—Asia Minor, Syria, Mesopotamia, Arabia, Egypt and North Africa; in particular it included the holy places of Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem, of which the Sultan was guardian, a fact which made him an object of veneration. Even when the Turkish power decayed, though the rulers of these regions became practically independent, they recognized the supremacy of the Commander of the Faithful. In the days of the last great Sultan, Abdul Hamid (1876–1908), when Europe thought the Turkish Empire was on the eve of dissolution, there was a remarkable Mohammedan revival over every part of the East, of which Europe heard little; and the Moslems of India, of remote Malaya, and of Central Africa learnt to look to the Sultan more fully than ever as the head of their religion and the subject of their hopes and



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prayers. This "Pan-Islamic" movement was perhaps the last revival of the old vision of a single great Islamic society under the control of the Caliph.

Meanwhile the European peoples had been rapidly bringing the greater part of the Islamic world under their sway. The British conquest of India destroyed the last of the great foreign conquests of Islam, for India had been mainly under Moslem rule since the twelfth century ; now 70,000,000 Indian Moslems were subjects of the British Crown. The Russians subjugated the Moslems of Central Asia—Khiva, Bokhara and Samarkand. The French captured the Moslem lands of Algeria, Tunis and Morocco. The British gained control over Egypt, though it still (until the outbreak of the war) recognized the supremacy of the Sultan. Russia and Britain divided between them (1907) control over Persia. On the very eve of the war (1911) the Italians annexed Tripoli. The Moslems of Central Africa (where Islam was rapidly extending its influence) were brought under the rule of the various powers which had partitioned that continent. The powers of Christendom (which had waged an equal war with Islam for more than a thousand years) seemed definitely to have won the mastery ; and the vision of a Great Society of Islam, under the rule of its Caliph, which

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good Moslems had cherished since the days of the prophet, seemed to have melted into thin air. Only the Ottoman Empire remained independent. So long as it survived, the vision splendid did not die. But even before the war, its days seemed to be numbered. First Abdul Hamid, and then the Young Turks who dethroned him in 1908, were glad to place themselves under the protection of Germany, the only great European Power which had not annexed Moslem lands. When the Kaiser visited Constantinople, Jerusalem and Tangier before the war, and declared himself the protector of all Moslems, he was hoping to enlist on the side of Germany the still unexhausted enthusiasm of Islam. And when, in October, 1914, Turkey entered the war on the side of Germany, she not only brought great reinforcements of fighting men : she could, in the sacred name of the Caliph, preach a *jihad*, or crusade against the infidel, to the whole Moslem world.

But the *jihad*, though not without effect, had much less influence than the Germans may have hoped, or the Allies feared. This was because disintegrating forces were already at work in the world of Islam. The infection of the West was spreading even before the war. The Western idea of nationalism (which is utterly incompatible with the Islamic ideal of a supra-national religious society) was



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taking root in various parts of the Moham-medan world. The Young Turks (mostly Western-educated) cared little about Islam, unlike Abdul Hamid; they cared far more about Turkish nationality; and for Abdul Hamid's Pan-Islamic movement, which was religious, they substituted an ineffectual "Pan-Turanian" movement, which was purely racial. The Egyptians had begun to wish to get rid of British control; but this was not because the British were infidels, it was because the Egyptians, Christian Copts as well as Moslems, were thrilled by the idea of a free Egyptian nation. Even the Arabs (who had spread their language over Syria and Mesopotamia as well as Arabia) were being stirred, before the war, by the idea of Arab nationality; they had never liked the Turk, though they had submitted to his rule.

The war stirred all this ferment of new ideas, and long before its close it had become clear that, if the Allies won, the Islamic world would either be partitioned among the victors, or would break up into a number of nation-states, as the Christendom of the Middle Ages had earlier done. One of the first events of the war (1914) was the declaration of a British Protectorate over Egypt, which was now for the first time formally included within the British Empire, and formally cut off from the dominions of the Caliph. In the next

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year (1915) the idea of stimulating among the Arabs a nationalist revolt against the Turks was taken up; negotiations were opened with the Emir of Hedjaz (in Arabia), whose territory included the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, and who was himself descended from Mohammed. He was given a vague promise of British support for the establishment of an Arab national state, which (he believed) was to include Arabia, Syria and Mesopotamia. He revolted against the Turks, and took the title of King; and the Arabs gave invaluable help to Allenby's campaign in Syria, and to Maude's campaign in Mesopotamia, which broke the Turkish power. The King of Hedjaz was also tempted to claim the Caliphate; but the suspicion of this, and the fear that the Caliph of Islam would be a puppet of a Western power, aroused great uneasiness throughout the Moslem world, even in India. Later (in 1917) the famous Balfour Note was issued, promising that Palestine should become a Jewish National Home; as the population of Palestine was predominantly Arab, this caused a good deal of perturbation in the Arab lands.

Meanwhile the Allies, anticipating the downfall of Turkey, were making secret agreements for the eventual partition of her Empire. France had long fixed her eyes on Syria; Britain, because of the oil-supply and



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the security of India, wanted southern Mesopotamia, which she had already occupied, and claimed that Palestine must be assigned as a Jewish National Home; Russia, already promised Constantinople, wanted Armenia and north-eastern Asia Minor. By a secret arrangement, known as the Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916), the Allies settled in outline the distribution of these territories: Arab national sentiment, in so far as it was not content with Arabia, was to be placated by the creation of Arab states under British and French protectorates. Later Italy and Greece were both promised wide territories in western Asia Minor; the Turk would be left, if these arrangements were carried out, with only a little state in the centre of Asia Minor.

British armies, aided by the Arabs, broke the Turkish power in the brilliant Syrian and Mesopotamian campaigns of 1917 and 1918. Then came the problem of settlement. It took a long time, much longer than the settlement of Europe, because of the difficulty of reconciling the secret agreements of the Allies with the aspirations of the peoples concerned. The Arabs had hoped for a unified Arab state, including Arabia, Syria and Mesopotamia (or Iraq). They did not want a European protectorate. But if there must be a protectorate, they wanted it to be exercised by a single

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power for the whole area—preferably America, or failing America, Britain. They were utterly opposed to a French protectorate, and most of all they disliked the partitioning of the area among different powers. The Emir Feisal, son of the King of Hedjaz and comrade of Lawrence, came to Paris and London to plead their cause. The British delegates, especially Mr. Lloyd George, did their best to persuade the French to permit of the creation of an Arab state in Syria, and to be content with control of the coast. But the French insisted that they must have Syria. The Emir Feisal betook himself to Damascus, and tried to organize an independent Syrian state : the French sent an army to deal with him (1920), drove him out, and proceeded to organize four separate protected states, one consisting chiefly of the Lebanon Christians ; on whom they relied for support.

Eventually an agreement was reached, whereby the Allies announced that their aim was to foster self-governing communities under their protection, and gave themselves mandates for their respective territories, which were sent for endorsement to the League of Nations. The French obtained a single mandate for Syria and the neighbouring coastal province of Cilicia, in Asia Minor ; the territory extended southwards as far as the Sea of Galilee, and eastwards to the



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Euphrates. As we shall see, they were to have a great deal of trouble before their authority was established. The British obtained two mandates, one for Palestine, where the Jewish National Home was to be established, together with a wide semi-desert tract beyond the Jordan, which came to be known as Transjordan; the other for Mesopotamia, or Iraq. As soon as might be, they encouraged the Iraqis to choose the Emir Feisal as their king, and made his brother Emir of Transjordan, thus giving some sort of satisfaction to Arab hopes. Arabia itself was declared independent: it is mainly desert, and nobody wants it or could control it. In Palestine Sir Herbert Samuel was sent out as High Commissioner to start the Jewish National Home—no easy task, in face of the resentment of the Arab population.

### *The New Turkey*

These arrangements were imposed upon the Sultan of Turkey, who, in Constantinople, was at the mercy of the Allies; he was also made to submit to the cession to Greece of Smyrna, and a large area in Asia Minor. But the nationalist fervour of the Turks was aroused by these arrangements. They prepared to resist—not in Constantinople, but in their true “national home,” Asia Minor,

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with the town of Angora as their centre. They found a very able leader, in Mustapha Kemal Pasha ; they formed a National Pact, whereby, dropping all claim to the Arab provinces, they insisted that Asia Minor must remain Turkish ; and they proceeded to attack the Greeks. The Allies were not prepared to assist the Greeks ; indeed, the French had made a secret agreement with the Turks, whereby they withdrew from their " mandated territory " of Cilicia ; for they did not wish to have to deal with hostile Turks as well as with rebellious Arabs. The Greeks were driven into the sea. The dictated Treaty of Sèvres was scrapped (1922) ; and long negotiations were begun at Lausanne, where a new treaty was concluded in 1923. It gave the whole of Asia Minor to the Turks—a national state ; it provided that the Greek inhabitants of Asia Minor, and the Turkish inhabitants of Greece, should both be transported ; and it even restored Constantinople and the Straits to the Turks. Thus the result of all the confusion was that an independent National Turkish State, and eight more or less Arab states under French or British protection, were set up within the area of the former Ottoman Empire.

This meant a definite break-up not merely of the Turkish Empire, but of Moslem unity. But a yet greater breach with the traditions



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of Islam was to follow. The Turks declared their country a republic, wherein sovereign power vested solely in the representative Assembly. They then proceeded to depose the existing Caliph, and to elect a new one (1922). Two years later they actually abolished the Caliphate by a resolution of the Assembly. There was to be a complete separation of politics from religion : whereas the essence of the Islamic system had been the identification of the two. Religious orders were abolished ; education was taken out of the hands of the priesthood and brought under the control of the State ; and, whereas the Koran had hitherto been the supreme legal code, for all Moslems, a new civil code, based on that of Switzerland, and a new criminal code, based on that of Italy, were adopted. Women were emancipated, and freed from the veil : their subjection and seclusion had been an essential feature of the Mohammedan system. Even costume was regulated as a means of emphasizing the breach with tradition : Turks were henceforth required by law to wear hats with brims. This seemingly trivial detail was important, because it was the universal Mohammedan custom to wear the fez or the turban at prayers ; the worshipper was required to prostrate his forehead to the ground ; and it would be impossible for him

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to do this if he wore a hat with a brim. Never had there been a more sudden or complete breach with tradition. The new Turkish national state, while still Mohammedan, had cut itself off completely from its Islamic past. It set itself to adopt, as completely as possible, the institutions and the modes of life of Christendom, while vigorously repelling the political supremacy of the West. These profound changes caused great perturbation throughout the Mohammedan world; but they seem to have been accepted without difficulty by the mass of the Turkish people. The Turks cared no longer about the unity of Islam: they cared only about the freedom and progress of the Turkish nation.

The break-up of the Ottoman Empire, and, still more, the abolition of the Ottoman caliphate, put an end for ever to the dream of a united supra-national Moslem society, ruled by its Caliph. Islam was now without a Caliph. Could there be a Caliph at all without secular power? This would be contrary to all tradition. And if a Caliph without secular power was imaginable, how was he to be chosen? These questions have disturbed Moslem scholars in recent years; there have been conferences and congresses to discuss them. But the questions remain unanswered; and the Moslem world as a whole does not seem to be greatly troubled



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about them. Its various parts are chiefly exercised about their claims to national freedom. Nationalism has finally conquered and destroyed the former universalism of Islam, just as it earlier conquered and destroyed the universalism of mediaeval Latin Christendom.

### *The Arab States*

There have been many troubles since the settlement in the dismembered parts of the Ottoman Empire. In *Syria* there was constant resistance to French control, which developed into an open and formidable rebellion in 1925; and some of the episodes of this struggle were of such a character as to lead to an inquiry by the Mandates Commission of the League of Nations.

In *Palestine* there has been frequent friction between the Arab inhabitants and the Jewish immigrants, and constant tact and care have been demanded from the British administration. But the friction has been far less serious than in the French area; and the Jewish immigrants are proving themselves to be useful citizens, and are contributing to the revival of prosperity in a neglected country.

In *Iraq* there was at first great opposition to the British regime, leading in 1920 to open rebellion. Britain had spent very

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large sums on the development of the country, and had imported a number of officials who perhaps hastened too quickly in the reorganization of the country. But in 1922 a treaty was concluded between Britain and Iraq, which contemplated the termination of the protectorate within four years, and the admission of Iraq as an independent member of the League of Nations. The League itself, however, thought this period too short for the establishment of settled government in a disorganized country, and asked that it should be prolonged to a possible twenty years. And the Iraqis themselves, anxious though they were for independence, stipulated that Britain should first secure their "rights" in the vilayet of Mosul. Mosul lay to the north of Iraq; it was inhabited by a very mixed population, largely non-Arab, including some ancient Christian communities. The Turks claimed that it was not included in the territories they had ceded, and for some time refused even to negotiate on the matter. A special commission from the League of Nations had to be sent out to investigate the problem. The League gave its award in favour of Iraq, and left to Britain the duty of maintaining it. Fortunately, in 1926, Turkey at last agreed to sign a treaty whereby she accepted the situation. Britain remains as the protecting power. But a



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system of self-government, with a representative assembly, has been set up; and as soon as it is securely established, the protectorate is to be withdrawn, and Iraq is to become an independent member of the League of Nations—another national state within the realm of Islam. A treaty signed in 1930 pledges Britain to bring about this final stage at the earliest moment.

Finally, in *Arabia* proper there has been an important revolution. The King of Hedjaz, who played so active a part during and after the war, and at one time hoped to be the head of a great Arab state, and perhaps also to claim for himself (as a descendant of Mohammed and the guardian of the Holy Places) the succession to the Caliphate, had aroused against himself the resentment of the Moslem world because he was considered to have been the tool of Britain. In 1924–5 he was driven from his throne by the neighbouring Emir of Najd, a strict Moslem of the Puritanical Wahabi sect. For a time there was a fear that this might portend a revival of the old Mohammedan fanaticism; and that the new Arab states of Transjordan and Iraq might be imperilled. But the days for such a revival were over. Even the Wahabi prince was ready to negotiate treaties whereby the boundaries between himself and his neighbours were determined; and

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Arabia was once more left to her desert seclusion.

The break-up of the Ottoman Empire has thus led to momentous results—perhaps the most remarkable of all the direct political consequences of the war. The Caliphate has vanished, and with it the long-cherished dream of a great Islamic society, owing allegiance, secular and spiritual, to its supreme Caliph. This dream has been replaced by the Western ideal of national freedom; and a group of nation-states is taking shape within the ancient Semite realm. These states resent the political supremacy of Europe, while at the same time they are setting themselves to imitate the methods of Europe. One of them—Turkey—has triumphantly asserted its independence, and has at the same time made a violent breach with its old traditions. Another—Arabia—is also independent, but cleaves to the old ways. The rest are moving gradually towards the status of nation-states, and the assimilation of Western methods, under the tutelage of France and Britain and of the League of Nations. Whether, or how soon, they will achieve this status is one of the questions of the future. But at least it is clear that the years which saw this transformation in the central portion of the Mohammedan world, which has so long and



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so successfully resisted the forces of change, were years of great significance in the history of civilization.

### 3. *The Mohammedan World: non-Ottoman Countries*

It was not only in the lands which had been parts of the Ottoman Empire that changes and unrest were produced by the war. Everywhere there was disturbance; and everywhere it was marked by the same features, a desire to shake off the political supremacy of the West, and a desire to imitate the methods of the West.

#### *North Africa*

There was unrest in almost every part of North Africa, where France was the predominant power, while Spain held a strip of territory in Morocco, and Italy had annexed Libya (Tripoli and Cyrenaica). From the beginning of the war, revolt raged in *Libya*, and the Italians could maintain only a foothold on the coast; it was only after a series of hard campaigns following the war, in some of which the Italians received severe checks, that the province was reduced to obedience. In northern *Morocco* the warlike tribesmen of the mountain region known as the Rif, led by an able chieftain, Abdul Karim, inflicted a crushing defeat upon Spain,

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and for two years (1924-6) contrived to hold their own, with the use of Western methods, against a combined attack by French and Spanish armies. These serious rebellions had their effect throughout the Moslem world, and greatly reduced the prestige of Europe. In the French protectorate of *Tunis* there was a nationalist movement, demanding constitutional reforms, to which the French made some concessions ; and even in Algeria, the oldest of the French dominions, there was a demand for greater political liberty.

### *Egypt*

Egypt, which owed to British guidance her recovery from the financial and economic chaos into which she had been plunged by her nineteenth-century rulers, had nevertheless never accepted British supremacy. When the war broke out she submitted to the British protectorate—mainly, no doubt, because large British forces dominated the country ; but there was no indication of sympathy with Turkey. On the other hand, there was no desire among the Egyptians to be incorporated in the British Empire . they held that Egypt was an independent state, which had been illicitly brought under European control ; and while they were not sorry to be rid of the nominal Turkish suzerainty, they were still more eager to shake off their



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subordination to Britain, and to get rid of the special privileges which all the European peoples claimed in Egypt as throughout the Turkish Empire.

No sooner was the war at an end than a nationalist movement broke out with a new vigour. Before the war it had been limited to the educated class. Now it captured the fellahin, or peasantry, who owed more to the work done by the British than any other class. The movement found an able and uncompromising leader in Zaghlul Pasha. The party which he organized was known as the *Wafd*. It demanded nothing less than complete and unqualified independence; and its influence became so powerful that neither the King nor his successive ministries dared resist them. The Peace Conference and (at first) the Government in London would not listen to these demands. But in 1920 the movement had become so serious that a special commission of inquiry, headed by Lord Milner, was sent to Egypt to seek a solution. The Commission was boycotted: the Egyptians would not even discuss their claim to independence. Its report, however, was favourable to the main claim, though it made certain reservations. But no agreement could be reached. Only by the exercise of force on a large scale and for a long period could British supremacy in Egypt be secured,

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and public opinion in Britain was not prepared to contemplate such an undertaking. On the other hand, the British Government felt that Egypt controlled a vital link in the communications of the British Empire ; that the Sudan (which the Egyptians claimed as part of Egypt) had only been rescued from barbarism by the work of British officials, and could not be allowed to relapse ; and that foreign interests in Egypt needed protection.

At length, in 1922, having failed to reach an agreement with any Egyptian government, Britain issued a one-sided Declaration, whereby the Protectorate was declared to be at an end, and Egypt to be " an independent sovereign state." But the Declaration went on to reserve four important points which were to be at the discretion of the British Government until a friendly agreement had been reached. These four points were : (*a*) the security of British communications in Egypt (meaning, in particular, the Suez Canal) ; (*b*) the defence of Egypt against foreign aggression or interference ; (*c*) the protection of foreign interests in Egypt, and of the rights of minorities ; and (*d*) the administration of the Sudan. Not unnaturally, the Egyptians felt that " independent sovereignty " must be somewhat unreal so long as these large reservations were maintained. No agreement on the heads set



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forth in the Declaration were reached ; and although a new parliamentary constitution was drawn up, and a " responsible ministry " was established, with Zaghlul as the first Prime Minister, the British military occupation still continued, and there was a series of acts of violence against British officials, which culminated in the murder of Sir Lee Stack, the Sirdar (Commander-in-Chief) of the Egyptian Army. This outrage, and the stringent demands for redress which the British Government immediately made, and enforced by vigorous military measures, seemed to make a satisfactory solution of the problem more difficult than ever ; and although the situation has since become less acute, no agreement has yet been made between the " sovereign and independent " government of Egypt and the British Government. The conditions demanded by Britain are still, in fact, maintained by force. Even the Labour Government of 1929, though eager to reach a settlement, and ready to go far in concession, could not achieve any acceptable solution : its endeavours broke down on the inflexible demand of the Egyptians that the Sudan should be restored to their control, though in race and language the Sudanese have no sort of kinship with the Egyptians.

Like the concurrent movements in Persia,

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in Iraq, in Syria, in Morocco, the long-continued troubles in Egypt provide remarkable evidence of the strength of the hold which nationalism has obtained in the various separated parts of the Islamic world, and of the formidable obstinacy of the revolt against the political supremacy of the West. All these new Mohammedan nation-states have set themselves to reorganize themselves on Western lines ; but all of them alike are resolved not to submit to Western dictation. The Mohammedan world is far more troublesome to the powers of Europe, now that it is dismembered and the nationalist spirit has taken root in its various parts, than it ever was when it still clung to its Orientalism and to the old dream of Islamic unity.

### *Persia*

All the territories already touched upon had at one time recognized the real or nominal supremacy of the Turkish Sultan. Between Mesopotamia and India lay a wide region of the Islamic world which had never been a part of the Ottoman Empire ; a barren and inaccessible region which had been less touched by Western influence than almost any other part of the world. Yet even here, in Persia and in Afghanistan, the revolt against European supremacy found vigorous expression.



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Persia, when the war broke out, had seemed to be doomed to fall under the control of Russia and Britain, which had marked out "spheres of influence," covering respectively the west and the east of the country, by the agreement of 1907. In the later stages of the war, and after its conclusion, the northern regions of Persia were the scene of a good deal of irregular fighting, mainly between British and Bolshevik forces. But Bolshevik Russia, instead of striving to maintain the power which the Tsarist government had won, preferred to make friends with Persia, as a possible ally against the west, and withdrew all claim to supremacy. Britain, who had claimed protectorate rights in Eastern Persia only as a safeguard against Russia, also withdrew her claims. Persia, therefore, regained complete national independence. There was an attempt to establish the authority of the Mejliss or Parliament, and to set up a republican government. But Persia was not ready for the institutions of democracy. A revolution gave her a new dynasty. American advisers were called in to reorganize her finances. By becoming a member of the League of Nations, Persia secured a safeguard against any future menace to her independence.

*Afghanistan*

For nearly a century, the wild and lawless tribes of the mountain land of Afghanistan had found themselves squeezed between two formidable European powers—the Russian Empire on the north, the British Empire of India on the south-east. In two unfortunate wars (1839–40 and 1879–80) armies from India had attempted to secure control over Afghanistan, and the vital passes of the north-west through which every historic invader of India has passed. These wars had shown the costliness and futility of any attempt to control Afghanistan. But, since the second of them, the British power had secured the principal passes, by annexing Baluchistan and making an important military centre at Quetta, and by establishing a vague suzerainty over the borderland tribes through whose territory ran the Khyber and other passes. Moreover, the Amirs of Afghanistan had submitted to the control of their foreign policy by the Government of India: they had no independent relations with any other power, and in return they were rewarded by an annual subsidy, which, however, they had latterly refused to draw.

It was fortunate for India that throughout the war-period Afghanistan was ruled by an Amir, Habibullah, who was loyal to the



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alliance, and kept in check any unrest among his subjects, even when their fanaticism might have been stirred by the downfall of the Turkish power. But immediately after the war (January, 1919) Habibullah was murdered; and his successor, Amanullah, stirred partly by Mohammedan zeal, and partly by the incitements of Bolshevik agents from Russia, declared war against the British raj, and prepared to invade India. The situation was the more serious because the more enthusiastic of the Indian Moslems were so excited by the fall of Turkey that they were prepared to welcome and assist the invaders. A *Third Afghan War* had to be fought. The invaders were repelled so swiftly and with such overwhelming force that Europe scarcely heard of this episode.

The Government of India was in a position to dictate the terms of peace. It is significant of the new era that the treaty, instead of making British control over Afghan policy more effective, withdrew it altogether. Afghanistan was declared an independent and sovereign power; the control hitherto exercised over its foreign relations by the Government of India was brought to an end, and the promise of a subsidy was withdrawn. Soon Afghan envoys were to be seen in the capitals of Europe; and treaties were concluded between Afghanistan and Turkey,

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Persia and Russia. The Amir of Afghanistan, accompanied by a European wife, made a tour of Europe, and seems to have dreamed of introducing Western methods into his barbaric realm. His triumph did not last long. Soon after his return (1929) he was ousted from his throne, and Afghanistan reverted to its normal state of tribal anarchy. But at least it had shaken off the political supremacy of the West.

Thus, throughout the Islamic world, the effect of the war was that the extension of the power of the European peoples was definitely arrested; and a group of actual and potential nation-states, some of which were wholly independent, while others were placed under a tutelage which was declared to be only temporary, came into being amid the wreck of the old dream of Islamic unity. Turkey, Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Persia, Afghanistan form a group of new political units which will henceforth play their parts in the common life of the world, under the ægis of the League of Nations.

### 4. *Unrest in India*

The problem of government in India is far more complex and difficult than that of the Mohammedan world, or than that of Europe; for although India is a unity in a real sense, the differences of race, language,



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religion, caste and degree of development which separate her mingled peoples are immeasurably greater than those which divide the peoples of Christendom, or the peoples of Islam, from one another. In all her long history, India never achieved political unity until the British conquest gave it to her. From Britain, during the nineteenth century, came the gifts not only of political unity, but of established peace, impartial law, the introduction, in the English language, of a common medium of communication through which the small educated class in every part of the continent could communicate with one another, and, finally, the diffusion of a body of political ideas drawn from the West. From these circumstances there sprang, for the first time in Indian history, a sense of common Indian nationality. And, as it grew, it inspired resentment against subordination to a foreign people.

The Indian nationalist movement began half a century ago, finding its first expression in the Indian National Congress. But it was at first confined to the very small Western-educated section of the community; and even among these it was combined with a conviction that a continuance of the British connexion, which had created the unity of India, was essential to its maintenance. In the twenty years before the war, the demand

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for self-government grew, and began to take more violent forms; from 1907 onwards, largely under the influence of the blow to Western prestige inflicted by the Japanese victory over Russia, it became dangerous, and there was a campaign of secret conspiracy and murder, and an attempt to boycott British goods. Some concession to these demands was made in the Morley-Minto reforms, which introduced a substantial elected element (though not a majority) into the legislative councils of the provinces. But this only made opposition more vocal and more authoritative. The elected representatives, having no responsibility, behaved irresponsibly; and the problem of India had already become very difficult when the war came.

At first the outbreak of war quieted the agitation. It produced a remarkable evidence of loyalty to the British connexion. Very large numbers of troops were enlisted—almost exclusively from a few war-like provinces; and they played a gallant part in many fields of war, notably in Mesopotamia and Palestine. India could be, and was, almost denuded of troops. Nevertheless, the war produced a rapid strengthening of the nationalist movement, and a great enlargement of its aims. India was called upon to play a part, alongside of



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the self-governing Dominions, in the conduct of the war; her spokesmen found a place in war-cabinets, and (when the time came) in the Peace Conference and in the League of Nations. It seemed reasonable to expect and to demand that she should be given the liberties for which the Allies claimed to be fighting. Nothing less than full Home Rule would now satisfy the leaders. Moreover, the course of the war brought about a new attitude on the part of one of the great communities of India. The Mohammedans, who form nearly one-fifth of the whole population, were perturbed by the prospect of the ruin of the Ottoman Empire and the Caliphate. Hitherto they had largely stood aloof from the nationalist movement, which found its main support among the Western-educated Hindus. Now the possibility emerged of a united opposition to British supremacy by all sections of Indian opinion.

Realizing the rapidity with which events had moved, the British Government resolved upon a large and generous advance. In a momentous declaration, in August, 1917, it announced that the progressive development of self-governing institutions, with the ultimate aim of full national autonomy within the British Empire, was to be henceforth the accepted aim of British policy in India. But the immediate establishment of a complete

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system of responsible self-government, in a land so vast and so variegated, was out of the question. A first stage in progress was therefore designed in what was known as the "Montagu-Chelmsford" Report, embodied in an Act of Parliament. It set up, in the provinces, a hybrid system, known as "dyarchy," whereby certain spheres of government were "transferred" to responsible Ministers, while others (including finance and the maintenance of order) were "reserved" for the appointed Governor and the permanent officials. Even in the provincial sphere large overriding powers, for use in the event of a breakdown, were conferred upon the provincial Governor; and in the All-India sphere, though the legislative assembly was made predominantly elective, no element of "responsible" government was introduced. It was promised, however, that the scheme should be revised at intervals of ten years, and that the powers of self-government should be enlarged if the system worked well. This provision, however, only ensured that there should be continuous and violent agitation for an enlargement of powers.

From the outset the majority of the Indian Nationalists refused to accept these proposals as satisfaction for their demands. At first they boycotted the elections; with the result



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that a small number of Moderates were left to work the new scheme. It never worked well: a system of government which was partly responsible and partly irresponsible, and in which the responsible part had no adequate command of the funds necessary for its work, could not in any event have worked well. But the difficulties were increased by the unrest and excitement into which India was plunged during the ten years following the introduction of the reforms. Among the Hindus a remarkable leader emerged—the saintly Gandhi, who dreamed of getting rid of Western civilization as an evil thing, and leading India back into the imagined simplicity and spirituality of her early ages. To achieve this end he advocated what he called “non-violent non-co-operation”—a sort of peaceful boycott of all things British, until the British should be driven to abandon the attempt to control India. But non-violence was unattainable amid all the excitement. The most remarkable achievement of Gandhi was that the veneration which he inspired brought large elements of the peasant population, who form the vast majority of the Indian people, under the influence of the nationalist movement and of anti-British sentiment.

Among the Mohammedans the fall of the Turkish Empire aroused a vehement revul-

sion of feeling against Britain. The more extreme leaders of the Indian Moslems were even ready to encourage and welcome an invasion of India by the Moslems of Afghanistan, which, had it been successful, would have brought nothing but anarchy and ruin. For a time Hindus and Mohammedans—Gandhi and the Ali brothers—drew together. This was the most dangerous period of the crisis—from 1919 to 1923. It was marked by formidable troubles in the Punjab; and an unhappy episode at Amritsar, when machine-guns were turned against a crowd, deepened the embitterment and made settlement more difficult.

But the alliance of Hindus and Mohammedans was unnatural. The fervour of the Mohammedans declined when the Turks abolished the Caliphate and attacked many of the most time-honoured usages of Islam. And amid the general excitement there was a formidable revival of the ancient religious feuds between Hindus and Moslems: as soon as disturbance of any kind breaks out in India, and the firm control of government is relaxed, the vast mass of illiterate peasants vent their excitement upon their hereditary foes. The Moslems, being in a permanent minority, began to dread the coming of self-government lest it should imply a Hindu supremacy. And the native



princes, who govern one-third of the area and nearly one-fourth of the population of India, discovered a growing reluctance to accept subordination to a government dominated by the lawyers and politicians of British India.

All the experience of these hectic years reinforced the lessons of the past : that the racial, religious and caste-dissensions of India were so grave as to make the establishment of any system of government based upon discussion and agreement extraordinarily difficult ; and that it was only the presence in India of the British power—an outside and neutral power—which had saved India from the miseries of anarchy, and chained up the forces of disorder. But if Western influence had given peace and order to India, Western influence had also sown the seeds of a desire for liberty. How was the fundamental unity of outlook and purpose which is implied in the idea of nationality to be realized in a country so full of varieties and of discordant interests ? How was the practice of democracy to be reconciled with the facts of a rigid caste-system, which proclaimed the essential and unalterable superiority of the “ twice-born ” to the great mass, and which declared about one-fifth of the whole population to be inherently and unchangeably so degraded that their very shadow defiled ? Yet the

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ideas of liberty, once implanted, must grow. The "progressive realization of self-government" must somehow be attained. How was the achievement of this goal to be reconciled with the maintenance of that peace and order which India had never known before the establishment of British rule? Here were a series of problems more difficult than had ever before been faced in the history of politics.

The experiment of 1920 having manifestly failed, a new exploration of the problem had to be attempted. For this purpose the Simon Commission was appointed by the British Government in 1927. It was a purely British commission, drawn exclusively from the British Parliament, and the fact of its appointment was an assertion of the ultimate responsibility of Britain for the Government of India. For this very reason, Indian Nationalists refused to have anything to do with it. It was boycotted, during its visits to India, by all but a few powerless Moderates. Its recommendations were repudiated beforehand; and while it carried on its inquiries, the Nationalist Movement became more and more extreme, until it culminated in a demand for immediate and complete independence, put forward at Lahore in January, 1930. Even the Moderates were carried along by the stream: they would



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now be content with nothing less than the complete autonomy within the Empire which is expressed by the term "dominion status." The publication of the Commission's report was heralded by a new movement of "non-violent" revolt, led by Gandhi; and by grave riots in many Indian centres. So unreasoning had the Nationalist Movement become that scarcely any Indian would even consider or discuss the very great difficulties which lie in the way of self-government—the danger of a clash between Hindus and Moslems; the fundamental incompatibility of democracy and the caste-system; the cleavage between the warlike provinces which provide nearly all the fighting men for the army and the unwarlike provinces which provide almost all the examination-candidates for governmental positions; the vast size of India, and the infinite variety of the grades of civilization among its peoples.

Whether the proposals of the Simon Commission, or any other proposals, will be accepted by the leaders of Indian opinion; whether the political unity, the peace and the impartial administration of justice, which have been the greatest gifts of British rule, can be maintained otherwise than by the firm hand of power; whether any system of self-government can be efficiently carried on until large social changes have been effected

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—all these are questions which time alone can resolve. But one thing is clear. The events in India since the war have shown, even more clearly than the events in Turkey and in Egypt, that the more ancient civilizations of the non-European world, while they have accepted many of the governing ideas of the West, are in a state of revolt against the political supremacy of the West. The new wine of the West is fermenting in the old wine-skins of the East. What the result will be, no man may venture to foretell. But whatever it may be, it must rank among the great events of human history.

### 5. *Chaos in China*

Space does not permit of any detailed description of the revolutionary changes which have taken place in China, or of the chaos which has followed them. But a series of events which have so profoundly affected the destinies of not less than one-fifth of the human race cannot be disregarded.

When the twentieth century opened, it seemed inevitable that the ancient but pot-bound empire of China should break up, and should pass under the control of the principal European states and of Japan. This process was checked by the Anglo-Japanese Treaty of 1902, and by the Japanese victory over Russia in 1904-5. But China still lay help-



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less and disorganized ; the penetration of the country by Western influences—by traders, concession-hunters, railway-constructors, missionaries and educators—went on with increasing speed down to the war. Meanwhile there was rising among the younger Chinese, and especially among those who had been educated in Japan, America and Europe, a powerful national movement, which hoped to save China, as Japan had been saved, by the adoption of Western methods of organization. The great prophet of this school was Dr. Sun-Yat-Sen, who may be described as the Mazzini of the Chinese Nationalist Movement ; for, like Mazzini, Sun-Yat-Sen was a prophet rather than a practical statesman. He, and the Young China Movement of which he was the prophet, hated the political ascendancy of the European countries, and aimed at shaking off their yoke ; but they had adopted whole-heartedly the Western ideas of nationality and democracy, and wanted to adopt them in full in China, without stopping to consider whether they were capable of being applied to that vast, tradition-ridden and mostly illiterate population.

In 1911 a sudden revolution overthrew the Manchu dynasty, whose power (however inefficiently exercised) had held China together. It overthrew also the long-estab-

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lished system of provincial government wielded by the literate class of Mandarins; and, in name, it turned China into a single huge republic governed by an elected Parliament. But it was plainly impossible that any elected body could be really representative, or command the obedience, of the vast inchoate mass of China. Moreover, foreign powers still held strong footholds upon the soil of China; there were large European settlements, practically self-governing, at Shanghai and other great ports, whence most of the trade of the country was directed; the customs tariff, mainly administered by Europeans, was defined in the interests of foreign traders; the principal railways were under foreign control; and the foreign residents enjoyed the privilege of being tried only in their own courts. It was evident that China had many difficulties to overcome ere she could become a unified, peaceful and genuinely independent nation-state.

For some years a capable administrator, Yuan-Shi-Kai, maintained a semblance of unity, wielding a sort of dictatorship under parliamentary forms. But his power was resented by the more doctrinaire republicans of the school of Sun-Yat-Sen, whose strength lay in Canton and the south; while the governors of provinces made themselves practically independent. China was plainly



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slipping into anarchy when the war came. Engrossed in their own affairs, the European powers could no longer interfere in China, either to help or to hinder. This might have given to China an opportunity of establishing the new order. It actually gave to Japan the opportunity of making herself the controlling power in China. She conquered the German port and fortress of Kiao-chau, and established her authority over the rich, and strategically important, province of Shantung. Then she put forward a series of demands for concessions and privileges which the Chinese Government was too weak to resist. When the war ended, it seemed possible that the whole of the disorganized empire of China might pass under the control of Japan, and that all the immeasurable resources of the Yellow Race might be unified under a single direction.

Meanwhile, Chinese anarchy was growing apace. There was a government at Peking, which was represented at the Peace Conference and in the League of Nations. It claimed to speak for all China, and put forward demands that, since China was now a democratic republic, its complete independence should be recognized, it should regain full control over its own customs, and the special privileges of foreigners should be abolished. But the Peking government was

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manifestly so weak and ill-obeyed that its claims had little weight. In Canton and the south the followers of Sun-Yat-Sen, known as the Kuo-ming-tang, practically established an independent government, and were believed to be in active relationship with the Bolsheviks of Russia. In the various provinces, the reality of power fell to provincial governors, or army chiefs, who did not hesitate to wage open war with one another. China had fallen into a condition of unspeakable misery. When, at the end of the war, European and especially British traders resumed their activities, and strove to make up for lost time, it was natural that racial feeling should be stirred against them. The Japanese and the British, being the most active, were the special objects of an anti-foreign campaign and trade boycott.

At last, in 1926 and 1927, hopes of better things began to arise. The Radical party of the south, which seemed to be more disinterested than the self-seeking generals who controlled the greater part of the country, swept over the greater part of China, up to and beyond the Yang-tse-Kiang. Their advance was so formidable, and their hostility to the Europeans so manifest, that special forces had to be sent out to protect European lives and property: for a time Shanghai itself, the great European centre, was seri-



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ously imperilled. What was more important, there seemed to be some hope that the new government, which had established itself at the ancient capital of Nanking, in the heart of the country, might be able to establish an effective authority. It was strong enough to persuade both Japan and the European powers to abandon many of their claims; and if it had been strong enough to enforce its authority throughout the whole country, better times might have begun. But it could not do so. The old machinery of government had broken down, and new machinery could not easily be improvised, especially in a land so vast and so varied in its character. The temptations to corruption and ambition were too strong to be resisted. The powerful army chiefs, especially in the north, could not be subjugated. A long vista of confusion seems to lie before China, such as she has often known in the past, between the fall of one dynasty and the establishment of the next.

The ferment of Western ideas has, as yet, brought to China little but suffering: the new wine has burst the old wine-skins. Whether, or how, China can find her way to a settled system of orderly government for her vast population, time alone can tell. But two features of this story of disintegration stand forth in high relief. The first is that

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the Chinese people have definitely revolted against the political dominance of the European peoples. They insist upon "self-determination," however painful the process may be; and it seems likely that the new order, however slowly it may be created, will not now be brought about under European, or even under Japanese, control. Chinese nationalism is strong enough to forbid that, though not strong enough to secure peace and order for its own people. The second outstanding fact is that the most potent elements in the ferment of the new China, while they reject European control, have set themselves to reproduce European methods.

It is but a jejune and inadequate survey of this story of disintegration and confusion which space allows here. But it is clear that in China, as in so many other regions of the non-European world, the same features present themselves. Since the war, the old hypnotic ascendancy of the European peoples has come to an end. The non-European peoples are determined to free themselves from the political dictatorship of Europe; but they neither can, nor desire to, free themselves from the creative and disruptive ideas which have spread from Europe—the ideas of national liberty, democratic government, and industrial organization.



## CHAPTER V

### THE PROGRESS OF INTERNATIONALISM

#### 1. *Self-sufficiency Versus Interdependence*

THE war forced us all to realize that within three generations the world had become a single political and a single economic system, and that all peoples must henceforward be interdependent. This idea dictated the institution of the League of Nations. But it did not, and could not, bring about the immediate subordination of the particular interests of all states to the common interests of the whole. On the contrary, the egoism of nationality was even intensified by the war; and, as we have seen, the peace settlement, which created the League of Nations, also created a number of new national states, and left them free to pursue the will-o'-the-wisp of national self-sufficiency in armaments and in trade. The history of the ten years since the war has been the history of a continuous struggle between two

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conflicting aims or principles : on the one hand, the old aim of national self-sufficiency, which all national states have always pursued ; on the other hand, the recognition and acceptance of mutual interdependence.

On the whole, the ideal of self-sufficiency has maintained the upper hand throughout these distressful years. We have seen it at work not only among the states of Europe, but in the nationalist fervours of the non-European peoples. Almost all the nations have been pursuing the aim of national self-sufficiency in the economic sphere by means of high tariffs, although all have admitted (in the Economic Conference of 1927) that they are thereby ruining themselves. The obstacles to international trade are more serious and more numerous to-day than they were before the war ; for twenty-nine nations are all actively trying to prevent their subjects from buying the products of other peoples. They have their reward in the all but universal distress which has befallen the civilized world. Twelve years after the close of the war, the world presents, in the economic sphere, a strange phenomenon. There is a superabundance of all the foodstuffs and materials which are necessary for the production of wealth ; but they lie, stored and unsaleable, in the warehouses of the producing countries, while their producers are



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impoverished. There is a superabundance of the machinery and equipment whereby these materials could be made available for human needs, and of the skilled labour necessary to keep the machines at work ; but the machines are idle, their proprietors are going bankrupt, and the workmen who might be enriching themselves and the world are living in idleness and poverty, a burden upon those who are still at work. The chief cause of this strange state of things is that the nations, pursuing the aim of self-sufficiency, are placing all the obstacles they can devise in the way of the interchange of the means to wealth : they want to sell their own products, but refuse to take the only possible payment, the products of other countries.

Again, all the nations (with the exception of those which have been compulsorily disarmed) are still resolute to make themselves safe against imagined perils by means of armaments, and are burdening their peoples with the colossal cost of maintaining them. They know and frequently proclaim that they are ruining themselves thereby, and that they cannot by these means attain security ; just as they know that economic self-sufficiency is unattainable, and that the attempt to attain it is ruinous. They hold disarmament conferences ; but these always turn into armament conferences, in which each, regarding

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the rest as rivals, strives to secure some relative advantage. They cannot bring themselves to accept mutual interdependence or to trust one another ; they must still strive for self-sufficiency.

Amid these fears and rivalries, the League of Nations exists to foster and strengthen the newer and saner doctrine of interdependence. Sometimes it seems to have achieved very little ; and perhaps the bankruptcy of the ideal of self-sufficiency will have to be more fully displayed before the rival ideal of the League can hope for full success. Yet, in spite of the miseries which the pursuit of national self-sufficiency has brought, and is still bringing, upon the world, the progress which has been made in the brief ten years of the League's history is remarkable. After all, self-sufficiency is the aim which nations have set before themselves ever since nations existed, and a desire so deep-rooted cannot be mastered in a moment. Ten years is but a moment in the history of civilization. The best way of measuring what has already been achieved by the institution of the League of Nations is to consider what might, or would, have happened in the war-embittered world during this decade if the League had not existed.



## 2. *The League of Nations takes Root*

It was only gradually that the League could become the principal organ for the discussion of international problems. This could not happen until the peace settlement was completed. Until 1921 the Supreme Council of the Allies, which was responsible for the Peace Treaties, was still in being, and the most vexed problems were settled by it, usually without reference to the League. Even when the Supreme Council ceased to meet, its place was for many purposes taken by a conference of the Ambassadors of the principal powers, meeting in Paris. It was this body, for example, which exercised the decisive voice in the dispute between Italy and Greece, which broke out in 1923; the source of this dispute was a difference regarding the frontier of Albania, and as the delimitation of this frontier was a part of the treaty settlement, it was not within the competence of the League. In the Near East uncertainty did not come to an end until the conclusion of the Treaty of Lausanne with Turkey in 1923. Finally, the most vexed problems of the post-war period were those which arose from the clauses in the treaties regarding reparations, and from the troublesome question of inter-allied debts. Reparations were wholly withdrawn from the

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purview of the League, being entrusted to a Reparations Commission set up by the Treaty of Versailles. Hence the League had nothing to do with the most difficult situation of the post-war period, when, in order to secure reparations payments, French troops occupied the Ruhr district of Germany (1923), and Europe was almost plunged afresh into anarchy. It was not until the Reparations question received a temporary settlement in 1924 (followed by a more reasonable settlement in 1929) that the relations between the principal European states reached something like a normal condition, and the League system could get a fair chance of working. Meanwhile the problems arising from inter-allied debts had to be settled by the Allies among themselves. While these preoccupations filled the minds of the leading European statesmen, it was impossible that the League should become the main arena for the discussion of international affairs.

Even in this transitional period, however, and at a time when the machinery of the League was only beginning to take shape, the value of this international body was time and again displayed. The Supreme Council referred to it several difficult problems which it found itself unable to solve—mainly because, as the organ of a group of victor-powers, it could not command the respect for



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its own impartiality which was needed if a solution was to be acceptable. An outstanding example of this was the reference to the League of the problem of southern Silesia. The League had not a free hand in the settlement of this problem; it had to make the best of conditions already defined by the Supreme Council. Moreover, it had not yet developed the admirable technique of special and impartial commissions of inquiry which it has since used with great success. Its solution was by no means ideally satisfactory. Yet it may be said that it recognized in its proposals the necessity of paying regard to the economic needs of a disputed area, as well as to the racial or linguistic considerations to which the treaty-makers gave preponderant weight.

Again, towards the close of the transitional period, the League was involved in the difficult situation created by the sudden descent of Italy upon the Greek island of Corfu, which might have led to war, and was, indeed, an act of war. No clearer case has yet arisen of a breach of the Covenant by one of the greater powers. The Council of the League was actually in session when the episode occurred. It failed to take effective action for the protection of Greece, the weaker power. In effect, the Council of Ambassadors took the matter out of the

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hands of the League, and (on the ground that the dispute arose out of a boundary problem which was not within the League's competence) imposed a settlement that was very much in favour of Italy. But this led to vigorous protests on the part of the minor states in the Assembly of the League; and although the episode showed the difficulty of controlling the dictatorial attitude which Great Powers have been in the habit of assuming, it also made it certain that no future problem of this kind is likely to be settled outside of the League; and it exhibited the strength of an organized expression of civilized opinion, which the existence of the League makes possible.

A further, and an even more serious, difficulty in establishing the authority of the League has been that three of the greatest powers in the world, America, Germany and Russia, were in the early years absent from its deliberations. Germany became a member in 1926; since that date, the authority of the League, at any rate in Europe, has been far greater than before, because it is no longer what it earlier seemed to be, a mere organ of the victor-powers. America and Russia remain excluded by their own will. Their absence, and especially that of America, has been the greatest source of weakness. But both powers hang about the skirts of the



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League. They send delegates or assessors to the conferences which it summons. They burst in with projects, such as the Russian plan for complete, immediate and universal disarmament, or the Kellogg Pact, initiated by America, which are designed to show that these powers are not less, but more, ardent in the cause of peace than the members of the League. Nevertheless, the work of shaping a world-organization to secure the peaceful progress of the world's peoples has undeniably been crippled by the abstention and hostility of these two great powers.

In spite of these difficulties, the influence of the League has undeniably grown steadily during the first ten years of its existence; and the regular quarterly meetings of its Council, and the annual meetings of its Assembly, have become the arenas of all the most important international discussions. The clearest evidence of this is to be found in the increased attendance of the Prime Ministers and Foreign Secretaries of the powers. In the first years, down to 1922, when the Supreme Council was still the main centre of diplomacy, no Prime Minister or Foreign Secretary ever attended a meeting of the League Council; they were content to leave the representation of their interests to minor ministers. Since then they have attended with increasing regularity; and

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in the last four years about half of those present at every meeting of the Council have been Prime Ministers or Foreign Secretaries. The men who control the policy of all states have found that they cannot afford to neglect the League, because it has become the vital centre of international relations.

What is more, this has brought about a real though intangible change in the spirit in which international affairs are conducted. Those who have followed the proceedings at Geneva almost unanimously testify to the growth of what they call "the League spirit"—the growth of a habit of looking at problems in an international light, rather than in a purely national light. This does not mean that any mysterious change of spirit comes over national representatives when they go to Geneva. They still, no doubt, pursue their national interests; and the Great Powers (any one of which, under the rule of unanimity, can prevent any action which it dislikes) still dominate the situation. But the settlement of vexed points has ceased to be purely a process of bargaining between rival Great Powers, as it largely used to be. Each Power has to justify its attitude before an audience of neutrals, who, if biassed in regard to their own interests, are unbiassed in regard to most of the questions that come before them; and this has its effect. The



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Great Powers are learning that influence and leadership will be most likely to fall to them if and when they frankly adopt an international rather than a national outlook. It is significant that France, which (in the years immediately following the war) strove for the security which she desires by the old methods of building up alliances, has latterly sought it rather along the lines of an organized international system. By doing so, she has won a sort of moral leadership in Europe, which Britain might have had, but which she has lost by adopting an attitude of aloofness to the great projects of peace that have fired the imagination of Europe.

It may be said, then, that, in spite of great difficulties, the League of Nations has established itself, during its first ten years, as the necessary centre of international relations, certainly for Europe, and largely for the world. It could not now be dispensed with. There is no likelihood, or indeed possibility, of a return to the old regime in which world-affairs (so far as they were regulated at all) were regulated solely by the jealous bargainings of rival groups of Powers, always preoccupied about the "balance of power" between them. The minor Powers, which are now relatively far more important than they were before the war, have acquired the habit of participation in the discussion of

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common interests ; and although they are all equally self-regarding when their own immediate interests are involved, among them there grows up a common spirit. There can be, and there will be, no going back.

But the League of Nations was not established merely to be a centre of diplomacy. It was established to bring about the organization of peace on a secure and permanent basis, and to create a new international order, from which fear—the ruling force in the international politics of the past—should be banished. How far has it advanced towards the realization of this aim ?

### 3. *The Machinery of Peace*

The first great task of the League was that of organizing machinery for the pacific settlement of disputes. This may be of three kinds. There can be judicial settlements of cases which turn upon the interpretation of international law or of treaties, or depend upon the ascertainment of facts. There is an intermediate class of cases which are beyond purely legal methods of determination, but may be settled by arbitration, if both parties consent. Finally, there must always be some cases not susceptible of either judicial or arbitral settlement, which can only be dealt with by way of mediation or conciliation.



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Within the first year of its existence, the League succeeded in getting the approval of all its members (1920) for a statute establishing a Permanent Court of International Justice, with its seat at The Hague. The Court consists of eleven judges and four deputy judges, drawn from as many different nations, all elected by the Council and by the Assembly. They are all men of the highest judicial standing, and they represent every important system of law that exists in the world. The establishment of a supreme World-Court, to administer justice between States, was indeed a notable event in history ; and from the first this august tribunal has commanded the confidence of the world. It has already been called upon to decide many cases, and its decisions are building up a body of precedents which greatly enrich the accepted corpus of international law. The Court may also be asked by the Council of the League to give an "advisory opinion" on the juridical aspects of any dispute which the Council is considering. It has done so on several occasions, with a complete impartiality which commands confidence ; and in every instance its award has been accepted without question.

As yet, however, States resort to the Court only by their own consent, unless they accept what is known as the "Optional Clause,"

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whereby they bind themselves always to accept the jurisdiction of the Court in suitable cases. Until this clause has been universally accepted, this beneficent advance towards the reign of law will not be complete. It has been accepted by a number of states, including France (provisionally) and Germany (without qualification). Britain could not bring herself to accept it until 1929, and then only with large reservations.

The League has not yet succeeded in establishing any general system of arbitration; there are, indeed, great numbers of treaties of arbitration between individual states, but they vary widely in their provisions. An attempt to establish a universal and uniform system of arbitration which all members of the League would accept was made in the famous Protocol of 1924; but this has been inoperative, mainly owing to the opposition of Britain, who has consistently refused to bind herself beforehand to any general system of arbitration, though she has been as ready as any other state to use this method of settling disputes in particular cases. To attain a general agreement on the use of arbitration, embodied if possible in a single general treaty, is one of the aims of League policy; and until it is attained, the members of the League will not feel that sense of security in the enjoyment



of their national rights without which they are not likely to disarm. The minor Powers are all in favour of such a system. The Great Powers are reluctant to tie their hands.

A great advance in the employment of compulsory arbitration was made in the Treaties of Locarno (1925) whereby France, Belgium and Poland, on the one side, and Germany on the other, pledged themselves to refer any difference affecting their common frontiers to an arbitral tribunal. But partial and local agreements of this sort, however valuable they may be, do not take the place of a general system as a means of giving security to the world; and so long as two great Powers, America and Russia, remain outside of this movement, even Locarno treaties can be of little avail. America, it is true, is willing to sign arbitration treaties on a large scale. But she habitually reserves the Monroe doctrine; that is to say, she refuses to arbitrate upon any question which involves the political relations between any part of the rest of the world, and any part of North or South America. Such an exception greatly reduces the value of her treaties. Arbitration agreements will only yield a sense of security, and establish the reign of law in international relations, when they are universal in their range; and, as yet, little or no progress has been made in this direction.

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Finally, the Council of the League has made itself responsible for the exercise of conciliation so as to prevent the outbreak of war in all cases where the danger of war threatens, and any member of the League is involved. In no less than twenty-four cases the good offices of the Council have been called upon in this way during the last ten years; in eight cases hostilities had actually been commenced before the Council intervened. Conciliation by a neutral power had sometimes been used in the past as a means of averting war. But it was always attended with difficulties; the participants in the quarrel might resent the suggestion, and, in any case, it was nobody's business to offer it. Now, under the terms of the Covenant, the Council is bound to take up the task if any member of the League calls upon it to do so; and the mere announcement that the Council is about to meet to consider the question has more than once been enough to put a stop to hostilities.

In every case but two the action of the Council has been completely and promptly successful. The two exceptions were the Italian attack upon Corfu in 1923, already referred to, when the Council of Ambassadors took the matter out of the League's hands; and the Polish seizure of Vilna in 1920, when the League was only beginning its work, and



had not yet won the prestige it now enjoys, or perfected its mode of procedure in such cases. For it has gradually worked out an admirable mode of procedure. The first step is—without in any sense prejudging the question in dispute—to put a stop to fighting by reminding the states concerned of their obligations under the Covenant, and calling upon them to withdraw their troops from the frontier zone. Then follows the appointment of a commission of inquiry, invariably drawn from countries which have no interest in the dispute. They go into the matter (if it is a boundary dispute) on the spot, and present a report. Some of these reports, such as that on Mosul in 1925, have been admirably detailed, scientific and impartial. In every case, except that of Poland and Vilna in 1920, the award based on the report has been at once accepted by the contestants. If the dispute turns on a matter of law, or treaty rights, the Council calls upon the International Court for an “advisory opinion”; and every such award by the Court has hitherto been accepted. It has yet to be tested whether one of the Great Powers would submit as readily as lesser powers such as Jugo-Slavia, Greece and Turkey have done; though Britain was one of the parties concerned in the Mosul dispute of 1925, she was not very directly interested. But the

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more this procedure is used, the more prestige it acquires, and the less likely it is that any Power will defy it.

The League, then, has achieved a real but as yet a limited success in creating machinery for the pacific settlement of disputes. It has set up an International Court of Justice, whose prestige is very high; but, for most powers, resort to the Court is still voluntary. It has failed to establish a general system of arbitration for disputes not suitable for decision by lawyers, though the readiness to resort to arbitration has markedly increased. It has exercised its powers of conciliation with remarkable success, and shown that—at any rate in the case of minor Powers—it can be trusted to prevent the outbreak of war. All this represents a considerable achievement; but it is not enough as yet to give a sense of security to all the nations, especially as two of the most formidable Powers in the world still stand outside the League. And the result of this incomplete success is that there has been little or no progress in disarmament, because the nations will not disarm until they can feel sure that their rights will be otherwise safeguarded.

### 4. *Disarmament*

To bring about the disarmament of all peoples was one of the main tasks imposed



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upon the League. The Covenant itself bound all members to seek this result; and those Powers which were parties to the peace treaties were still further pledged by the implicit promise given to Germany in the Treaty of Versailles that her enforced disarmament would be followed by the agreed disarmament of all the other Powers. For ten years the League has been striving to meet this obligation. As yet it has completely failed.

First a direct attack upon the problem was made. A commission of military experts was set up. They were invited to consider a scheme (the Esher scheme) whereby there was to be an agreed unit of military force, and so many units were to be allotted by agreement to each state. But no conclusion was possible on this line of attack. All the experts came to the discussion with the determination that, whatever *absolute* reduction of forces there might be, their own state should be left *relatively* as strong as before. In other words, the discussion on disarmament turned into a discussion of armaments. Moreover, there could be no agreement between those who believed in national service, and those who favoured professional armies. Nor could there be any agreement on the lines of a limitation of the amount to be expended, since some countries gave a

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higher rate of pay to their soldiers than others. Nor could there be any equation between military power and naval power.

Meanwhile, the United States, taking the initiative independently of the League, invited the principal naval powers in 1922 to a discussion of naval disarmament—a relatively simple problem. The Washington Conference led to an agreement between Britain, America and Japan whereby these Powers agreed to a fixed proportion in the number of “capital ships” of more than 10,000 tons which they were to maintain. So far as it went, this was a useful achievement; in one limited field, at any rate, it enabled the three Powers to reduce their outlay without weakening their relative positions, and this was claimed, in America, as a proof that better results could be achieved outside the League than under its auspices. In reality, however, the agreement was much less valuable than it appeared. The three great naval powers did not disarm, or reduce their forces to what would be necessary in a peaceful world: they still dominated the seas, and remained, relatively to one another, as strong as they had been. Moreover, agreement was only reached by leaving to all Powers a free hand for the construction of ships of less than 10,000 tons; and in this grade a new competition



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soon began. The limitation was welcomed by the lesser naval powers : it left them free to build as many submarines and cruisers as they liked. In effect, the real problem of disarmament had not been touched.

Next the League tackled the problem from a new angle. It was evidently futile to hope that the Powers could ever agree on the complicated questions of relatively equal reductions in all arms. They would all insist upon maintaining their relative strength, so long as they continued to fear one another, and they would never agree on the computation of relative equality. The only hope seemed to lie in *first* giving to the peoples a sense of security, so that they should feel the waste of their resources upon armaments to be no longer necessary. At first it was hoped that the mere existence of the League, and the increasing confidence which it imposed, would give them this sense of security. But it was not enough. What guarantee was there that the aid vaguely promised by the Covenant to any of its members that was threatened would actually be forthcoming ? No Power would commit itself in advance to use its forces—especially as this might involve it in war with the Great Powers outside the League. Some other guarantee of security had to be found. So, under the leadership of Lord Cecil, the

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League turned to consider the means of creating security. A Treaty of Mutual Guarantee was worked out, whereby all the signatories were to pledge themselves to come to the aid of any of their number who might be the victim of aggression. But who could decide what constituted "aggression"? When the draft Treaty was completed, in 1924, it was abruptly turned down by the Labour Government, then in power in Britain.

Undismayed, the League turned to consider other methods of giving a sense of security. With the co-operation of the British Ministers, and the warm backing of France, it worked out an elaborate scheme of compulsory arbitration which was to be binding upon all members of the League, and of joint undertakings to punish any Power which refused to accept these peaceful methods of settlement, or to abide by their results. The Protocol, which embodied this scheme, was a very elaborate and carefully wrought document, which seemed to leave no loophole. But by the time it was ready for submission to the Powers, a new Ministry had succeeded to office in Britain. In 1925 the Conservative Government turned down the Protocol as emphatically as the Labour Government had turned down the Treaty of Mutual Guarantee; and without suggesting any alternative. Once again Penelope's web



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was unwoven, and the work had to be done afresh.

In 1925 a real advance was made, at the suggestion of Germany. After long negotiations the Treaties of Locarno were concluded, between Germany on the one hand, and on the other her western neighbours, France and Belgium, and her eastern neighbour, Poland. By these remarkable agreements the Powers concerned pledged themselves never to go to war over any question affecting their frontiers, but to submit all their differences to arbitration. So far as the Western frontiers were concerned, Britain and Italy guaranteed the treaties, pledging themselves to join forces against whichever Power should break them, the League of Nations being left to decide who was the guilty party. This might mean that if such an episode as the French occupation of the Ruhr should take place, Britain might find herself under an obligation to go to the aid of disarmed Germany against France, the greatest military power in the world. The risk seemed worth taking for the sake of ensuring peace between two historic enemies ; but it was a serious risk, so long as Germany alone was disarmed. So far as they went, the Locarno treaties marked a real advance. They brought Germany into the League of Nations (1926). If they held good, they would guarantee

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permanent peace on the most disturbed frontier in the civilized world. But, good as they were, the Locarno treaties did nothing to forward the cause of disarmament. Although France was now presumably safe on the side on which she had most reason for fear, she did not think of reducing her forces to the level of Germany—or at all. It might have been hoped that the Locarno model would have been followed elsewhere. But it had no successor. Britain in particular made it clear that she would accept no further commitments. Nor was she willing to make any Locarno treaties on her own account.

The main work had to be begun again; and the League appointed a Preparatory Commission, to prepare for a great Disarmament Conference. Long and elaborate discussions have taken place, and various formulæ and drafts have been discussed; but no conclusion seems to be in sight, either on the methods of reaching agreement as to disarmament or on the methods of attaining the security without which disarmament is unlikely to take place. There have been renewed special discussions on naval disarmament, in 1927 and again in 1930, for the purpose of dealing with the smaller war-craft left out of consideration in 1922. But the conference of 1927 broke up without



result ; and the Conference of 1930 reached only imperfect and unsatisfactory conclusions. The reason for this result is that when the experts meet, they argue always on the assumption that war is going to take place, not on the assumption that war is to be banished. Each Power, therefore, sets forth with the resolution that its *relative* strength must not be decreased, and that its special needs in the event of war must be met ; and as soon as the discussion comes to detail, each Power is unwilling to recognize the special needs of the others.

Meanwhile, two attempts to cut the Gordian knot had been made by the two Powers which still stood apart from the League, though they sent delegates to join in these discussions.

Russia put forward in 1928 the sweeping proposal that all armaments should be at once and completely abolished : a proposition which found no response in any quarter. America, in the same year, proposed the universal adoption of a Pact of Peace, popularly known as the Kellogg Pact, whereby every nation undertook never to use war as an instrument of policy, but to settle all differences by arbitration. All the nations signed this undertaking, including America herself and Russia ; and many people thought that the problem was solved. But it was not

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solved : it was not even brought appreciably nearer to solution.

In the course of the discussions which preceded the signature of the Pact, it was made clear that " defensive wars " were not covered by it. But who is to decide what is a defensive war ? In 1914 Austria would have described her invasion of Serbia, and Germany her invasion of Belgium, as defensive wars. No such exception can safely be made, unless there is some impartial and recognized authority whose business it is to discover and declare when a war is defensive, and when it is aggressive. In the case of members of the League such an authority exists in the Council : any power is an aggressor which does not make use of the means of peaceful settlement which the Covenant provides. But Powers which are not members of the League are left to decide this question for themselves. Moreover, America seems to have made up her mind that the Monroe doctrine is not to be affected by the Kellogg Pact. While the Pact was being signed, her troops were occupying the ports of Nicaragua, a little state which is actually a member of the League. Finally, the question (which is the root question of the whole problem) what is to be done with a Power which disregards its obligations, was left without any answer. America herself has made it clear



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that she accepts no responsibility on this head ; she will give no undertaking to join in outlawing or punishing a state which breaks the Pact, or even to abstain from claiming the right to trade with such a state if the other nations decide to boycott it. A mere undertaking to forswear war—especially if “ defensive wars ” are excluded, and left to be defined by those who wage them—will do nothing to give the security which the nations demand as a condition of disarmament. After the Kellogg Pact had been signed by all the nations of the world, America undertook a huge programme of naval construction—a mere waste of money if there was to be no more war ; and a strange means of encouraging other nations to disarm on the strength of the Kellogg Pact.

Thus, after ten years of strenuous discussion, no progress at all (except, in a very limited way, in the naval field) has been made in the disarmament of the world. Yet the discussion goes on, and must go on. Ere long, unless some real progress has been made, the question must be raised whether it is legitimate to keep the disarmed nations in a defenceless position amid neighbours armed to the teeth, when the implicit pledge which accompanied their disarmament remains unfulfilled.

The discussions have not been wholly

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wasted. They have, at least, made one thing clear: that the provision of security, and the creation of a system under which every nation will be as sure of its rights as if it were fully armed, are the only conditions which will make effective disarmament possible. When the nations are convinced that there is no risk of war, they will cease to waste their substance upon armaments: not before. It is therefore by the steady building up of an international order, of a mutually helpful world-society, that the great aim can best be attained. And for this purpose the work of the League of Nations, not only in providing methods of peaceful settlement, but in bringing about a habit of consultation and co-operation among the peoples, holds out hopes for the future in spite of the continuous and disheartening failure of formal disarmament negotiations.

### 5. *International Co-operation*

It may well be that to future students of the progress of internationalism, the work of the League in the direct organization of peace will seem to be less important than other aspects of its work, whereby the habit of co-operation between nations has been stimulated and organized, and the international way of looking at things strengthened and encouraged. All this work is teaching the



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leaders of the peoples to realize that in a hundred ways—in economic development, in the fight against disease, in the establishment of good labour conditions, in the regulation of unwholesome traffics, whether of arms or of drugs or of obscene publications, in the development of free and rapid transit by land, sea or air, or in the traffic of ideas, it is no longer possible for any of us to live “for himself alone”; but that all nations are increasingly “members one of another.”

In all these spheres the League, and its various subsidiary organizations, have of course no powers of compulsion. All that the League can do is to bring together authoritative conferences, to set up permanent organisations for the collection of material and the supply of advice and information, and, in some cases, to draw up draft conventions which the nations can be pressed to adopt as part of their own legal systems. But in all these ways it tends to bring about a levelling up of conditions and a co-operation in progress which must help to link the civilized world more closely together.

Perhaps its most remarkable achievements have been in the economic sphere; for, in the modern world, political events are very largely governed by economic conditions, and the roots of the problems which statesmen

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have to solve are often to be found in economic factors which they do not understand, and whose operation is by no means limited to their own countries. The economic conferences which the League summoned at Brussels in 1920 and at Geneva in 1927 were attended by a representative selection of the ablest economists, financiers and industrialists in the world; and the review which they were able to take of the conditions which were retarding the recovery of Europe had an authority which no other organ could have possessed. The Brussels Conference certainly influenced the financial policy of many governments at a critical time, and helped to restore financial stability, the first step towards economic recovery. The Geneva Conference of 1927, with its impressive assertion of the ruin that was being brought to Europe by tariffs, has not yet influenced the policies of the European states, except, perhaps, by preventing a further increase of tariffs; but it may help to create a body of opinion which may possibly lead to sanity. Perhaps the time may also come when the variations of currencies and of exchanges, which do so much to create economic insecurity, may be replaced by a uniform and rational system, not dependent upon the accident of the amount of gold available. If this is ever to



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be done at all, it must be upon an international scale, and the League of Nations will provide the medium through which it will be done.

Yet more remarkable has been the work done by the League in the rescuing of a number of states from complete economic collapse. It has brought order into the finances of Austria, of Hungary, of Bulgaria, of Greece and of Estonia, and with the aid of loans which have been raised under its authority, has saved these countries from unutterable misery and perhaps from destructive revolutions. It has financed and helped to organize the difficult work of settling the thousands of refugees who flocked from Turkey into Greece, and, indeed, has rendered vast services in the repatriation of migrants of many stocks who were uprooted by the storms of war. All this work it was able to do because it could enlist the advice of the ablest economists and financiers, and the co-operation of the governments and the money-markets of the most powerful countries. The spectacle which it has offered of the organized strength of the civilized world being mobilized for the assistance of weak, suffering and disorganized peoples, is among the happiest auguries of a better future for the world that this generation, or any generation, has seen.

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Not less significant, though less obvious, is the influence which the League has wielded as the protector of the rights of minorities under the Minority Treaties, and as the guardian of the rights of backward peoples under the system of Mandates. It wields, in these spheres, very little direct power; it cannot invade or override the powers of duly constituted national governments. But it has not hesitated to call upon a great power such as France to justify publicly its treatment of its subjects in Syria, or a distant dominion such as South Africa to render an account of the revolt that broke out among the Bondelswarts of German South-West Africa, and the mode in which it was suppressed. It cannot inflict penalties, or even reprimands; but when governments which rule over minorities, or have backward peoples under their charge, know that they may be called to account before the bar of civilization, they are much less likely to act irresponsibly or tyrannically.

It is not necessary to go through all the many functions of international co-ordination, co-operation and information of which, in its brief life, the League of Nations has already made itself the centre. It has permanent headquarters staffs, drawn from among the ablest specialists of all countries, and assisted by international committees of



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experts, to deal with a great variety of subjects, and to stimulate the nations, by helping them with organized knowledge and advice, to make progress along parallel lines ; and when these experts are able to draft a convention which all nations can be asked to accept, and which will be pressed upon them with all the authority of the Assembly of the League, the probability of common progress is, at the least, very materially increased.

The International Labour Organization—which is the most important and the most independent of all the subsidiary organizations of the League, and includes representatives of the Governments, the Employers and the Workers in every member-state—is alone responsible for more than a score of conventions dealing with such subjects as the hours of labour, the minimum age for the employment of children, the right of combination among workpeople, the allowance of a weekly day of rest, or the use of white lead in painting. These conventions may be adopted by more states or by fewer ; they may often be ill-observed ; but they represent an endeavour to bring about a common policy in the fair treatment of workers which stimulates the more backward countries, and tends to protect the more progressive countries from unfair competition.

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All these may be, and commonly are, regarded as subsidiary activities of the League, less important than its main work of maintaining peace and bringing about disarmament. The judgment of the future may well regard them as being more important in their ultimate effect, because they are teaching the leaders of opinion in all countries to realize that, in our modern world, we are all members of a single Great Society, a World Community. It is the spread of this conviction which will ultimately create the atmosphere of peace, and bring the nations to realize that it is as foolish and shortsighted in them as it would be in the counties of England to maintain armies against one another, or to imagine that they can enrich themselves by refusing to trade with their neighbours.

Despite the fervid nationalism and the bitter animosities of the post-war years; despite the all but universal eagerness of peoples to strive after the unattainable and impoverishing ideal of self-sufficiency; the international habit of mind has undoubtedly made great progress in Europe, and in a less degree throughout the world, since the war. This progress has been immensely stimulated by the existence and work of the League of Nations. But it has been fostered also by greatly increased facilities of travel, which



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have made the greater part of Europe more easily accessible to the tourist than most of his own country was a hundred years ago. And it finds expression in an extraordinary growth of international societies of every type, which has been a very marked feature of the post-war years. The range of these activities may be indicated by the fact that the League of Nations itself publishes a catalogue of international societies and organizations which fills a volume of more than 300 pages.

Among these powerful organizations those of which we hear most often are perhaps the International Federation of Trade Unions, and the Labour International—both founded before the war. But not less important are the International Chamber of Commerce, founded in 1920 to remove obstacles to international trade, which has branches in forty-four countries; the International Committee of Scientific Management, founded in 1925 to stimulate efficient modern methods of production; the World Power Conference, founded in 1924 to encourage the proper utilization of various forms of industrial power; the International Shipping Conference (1921); the International Conference for Air Navigation (1922); the International Parliamentary Conference of Commerce, established in 1924 to encourage Parliaments

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in all countries to legislate along parallel lines in commercial subjects. In another sphere may be named the International Parliamentary Union, the International Zionist Organization, the International Federation of League of Nations Societies ; not to speak of a host of women's organizations, religious, missionary and philanthropic organizations, scientific, artistic and literary organizations.

The catalogue, indeed, soon becomes tedious. But the significant thing is that all these international bodies have spontaneously come into being, mostly since the war. They are a proof that, just because the world is every day being welded more closely together, the necessity of dealing with every sort of problem in an international, and not merely in a national way, is becoming every day more obvious. The national spirit is not weakened by all this, at any rate in its more healthy manifestation : internationalism is not the enemy but the complement and the protector of nationalism. But that kind of nationalism which aims at self-sufficiency, and tries to maintain it by means of armaments and tariffs, is an old-fashioned and a dying creed, vigorously though it fights for its life.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE CHANGED POSITION OF BRITAIN AND THE BRITISH EMPIRE

#### 1. *Britain*

THERE is no society, or group of societies, in the world whose destinies have been more deeply influenced by the war than Britain and the world-wide fellowship of peoples of which she is the centre.

The Great War of 1914-18 was the last of four epoch-marking struggles in which Britain has played a vitally important part in saving the world from domination by a single power, or by a single conception of civilization ; and each of these struggles has profoundly affected her own position. In the first, the Elizabethan war against Spain, she played the chief part in overthrowing that colossus and securing the Freedom of the Seas ; she emerged as the greatest of sea powers, free to live her own life without danger, and to extend her trade and power beyond the

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oceans. In the second, she supplied the cement and the leadership of the alliance which humbled the pride of Louis XIV ; she emerged as the greatest of trading nations, and the first self-governing nation, while the sovereignty of the new world lay open to her—it was attained within the next half-century. In the third, she was—thanks to sea power—the only unconquerable foe of the French Revolution and Napoleon ; she emerged as visibly the greatest power in the world, unchallenged mistress of the seas, mistress of the wealth produced by the new methods of machine production, mistress also of an amazing empire of continents and sub-continents. Each of these great world-wars led to a remarkable advance in the importance and the power of the British peoples. What has been the effect of the latest of the series ?

In the nineteenth century, when Britain was beyond all challenge or question the greatest power in the world, her strength was due to a number of factors. In the first place it was due to her insular position, which gave her a security against the perils of invasion such as no other European country enjoyed, and therefore enabled her to develop her characteristic institutions of self-government in peace, and to cultivate among her people a placable and law-abiding temper.



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In the second place it was due to her unchallenged naval supremacy, which not only gave her a more absolute security than any other nation enjoyed, but enabled her to wield an influence on all the shores of all the oceans, and to be the chief representative of European civilization to most of the non-European peoples. In the third place it was due to her control of a vast empire, which had been very easily acquired, and whose varied peoples not only accepted her rule loyally, but provided her with markets and supplies of raw materials such as no other people could command. In the fourth place it was due to her supremacy in modern methods of industrial production, and to her possession of vast supplies of easily accessible coal—until recently practically the only source of industrial power. In the fifth place it was due to the ebullient enterprise of her people, and to the strength of individual initiative among them. In the sixth place it was due to her financial strength, which in its turn sprang from the wide diffusion among her people of the habits of saving and investment, and from the admirable banking system which she had developed: she had become the financial centre of the world; she was the great creditor nation that supplied most of the capital for the development of new lands; and it was by means of her financial

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devices that most of the world's international trade was carried on. In the seventh place her greatness was due to the fact that she formed the world's one great free market and central emporium, because she gave free access to all the products of all countries, without let or hindrance. She was able to do this because she was not afraid of competition; and because, having to sell her goods in every part of the world, she knew that if she could not meet competition at home, she would never be able to meet it abroad. Finally, but by no means least important, the greatness of Britain was due to her system of free government, which had won the admiration and imitation of the whole world, because it appeared to combine freedom with stability, worked efficiently while commanding the loyalty of all its subjects, and gave them the protection of law without unduly restricting their freedom of action.

In all these respects British supremacy was a temporary thing. It could not be permanent, because there were other nations which were not her inferiors either in natural gifts or in material resources. It was being undermined in many ways during the generation which preceded the war. The war itself threatened to replace the declining supremacy of Britain, which was a supremacy of leadership and influence, by the supremacy of



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Germany, which would have been a supremacy of organization and of power. That change, at least, was prevented. But in a world that is moving towards freedom, no one people can attain, or ought to desire, anything that can be called supremacy. Since the war, and because of it, the old-time supremacy of Britain has been melting away. She has to reconcile herself to a new position in the world ; and it is evident that she is finding it difficult to do so.

Let us consider first the changes that have been taking place in the factors which made her strength.

Britain's insular position no longer ensures to her the security she once enjoyed. The rapid growth of air-transport exposes her, as she learnt during the war, to the perils of invasion in a form of peculiar horror : her vast congested cities can be destroyed in a night, and there are no means yet discovered by which this danger can be averted other than the banishment of war. Nor is this all. Her utter dependence, for mere existence, upon supplies of food from oversea exposes her to frightful and sudden disaster by means of submarine attack upon her shipping, which (as the war showed) can only be countered by slow and toilsome methods. She was brought within measurable distance of starvation by the few submarines that

were employed by Germany during the war : a future attack, if delivered by such a fleet of submarines as France (for example) possesses, would be more sudden and far more menacing. The island, which was once an impregnable fortress, has become a trap. Britain can no longer rely for safety upon her own resources, as she was able to do in the past. If she is to be safe, she must rely upon the co-operative action of the civilized world in making war impossible.

The period of British naval supremacy, after lasting for three centuries, has definitely come to an end. In the Washington Treaty of 1922, Britain was compelled to recognize the "parity" of the United States ; and she knows in her heart that, in the event of a competition of armaments with America, she would be inevitably beaten by the inexhaustible wealth of the United States. Nor is this all. In the war it was made clear that, under modern conditions, it is extraordinarily difficult to maintain an effective "command of the seas." Only a handful of German surface-raiders were at large when the war commenced, or succeeded in escaping during its course : they would not have been so few but that the German coast-line is very short, and was easily watched. Yet, as Lord Jellicoe confessed during the abortive Naval Conference of 1927, it took 140 cruisers



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to hunt these few outlaws down. Lord Jellicoe used this statement as a plea for the maintenance by Britain of only 70 cruisers. But if command of the seas is to be ensured in all circumstances, not 70 but perhaps 700 cruisers would be required. For the safety of the seas, upon which her life depends, Britain can no longer rely upon her own resources: she can only rely upon the co-operative action of an organized world-community. Naturally she is reluctant to admit this conclusion: but there is no escaping from it. Once—in this sphere, at all events—the most self-sufficient of the nations, she is now constrained by her position (if she will only recognize its implications) to become the protagonist of mutual dependence.

As for the Empire, so far as its principal members are concerned, it has ceased to be an "Empire" in any intelligible sense of the term, and is no longer under "control." It has become a loose partnership of free states, each of which is pursuing the aim of "self-sufficiency" by way of tariffs, and no longer provides open markets for British goods. This is true also of India, once the main market for the principal British export, cotton goods: India's determination to do without these goods if it can has been one of the principal causes of the sufferings of that industry since the war. The change in the character

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of the British Empire which has come about since the war, and the absence of any coherent imperial policy to replace British control, now so much attenuated, have been features of the post-war period so striking that we shall discuss them separately later.

The supremacy in modern methods of industrial production, which once belonged to Britain, is now no longer hers. It is, at the best, shared with her by a number of other nations. In the more modern applications of science to industry she has fallen behind both America and Germany, because her business men have been too contemptuous of scientific research. In the modern technique of mass-production, and in the reorganization of industry for the purpose of achieving the highest degree of economy and efficiency, which has been going forward at great speed in other countries since the war, she has lagged behind, and is paying dearly for her delay. She suffers by the obstinate conservatism of many of her employers, who cling too loyally to what was good enough for their fathers. She suffers also from the obstinacy of her highly organized Trade Unions, which make difficulties about changes of method that might involve temporary displacements of labour, and cling doggedly to restrictive practices established in the prosperous years before the war. Moreover,



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Britain no longer possesses her old-time superiority in the sources of power. Her coal is generally at deeper levels than the new supplies that are being exploited in America and elsewhere, and she has been slow to adopt efficient large-scale methods in the coal industry, or to utilize mechanical means of cheapening production. Moreover, coal as the source of power is being largely replaced by other sources, which Britain does not possess : by hydro-electric power, in which she cannot compete with the countries that have abundant water resources tumbling from the hills ; or by oil, or petrol, of which her soil yields almost nothing, and which she must import at vast annual cost.

There seems also to be a decline—though this is a point which cannot be statistically demonstrated—in the energy and enterprise of her people. She went into the war with a system of voluntary recruitment, which meant that the keenest and best of her sons went first, and were slaughtered in disproportionate numbers : perhaps it is a consequence of this that in the post-war years there has been a perturbing deficiency of first-rate men, men eager to shoulder responsibilities and to face up to difficulties. This has been perceptible in every sphere of life : whether in politics, in business, or in the arts, few great reputations have been made since the

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war, and the pre-war figures still dominate the scene. In large sections of the British peoples there is a growing readiness to look to the State to make good all their defects. Among the mass this habit may have been fostered by the elaborate systems of State provision for the relief of distress which have been developed in recent years, or by the way in which these systems have been used. But the same habit is perceptible among the directors of industry, who look to the State to protect them against foreign competition, whereas their fathers accepted the view that they (like the nation as a whole) must be ready to meet all competition on equal terms, or go under. A creeping apathy, a growing defeatism, a readiness to seek refuge from hard facts in a devotion to sports and other relaxations, seem to some observers to mark the temper of post-war Britain in a dangerous degree. If these tendencies exist, they are perhaps the natural reaction against the strain of war and the long disillusionment which has followed it; they may be evanescent, but, while they last, they are dangerous.

The financial strength of Britain has been terribly reduced by and since the war. She is loaded with a far heavier burden of debt and taxation than any other nation; because she took upon her shoulders a large part of the cost of financing her allies, and almost



nothing of this has been or will be repaid—only enough to balance the obligations to the United States which she underwrote for her allies. While other countries are decreasing their burdens, she is increasing hers; and the two most powerful bodies of political opinion in Britain both regard large increases of taxation as desirable in themselves, the one wishing to increase direct taxation, while the other wishes to increase indirect taxation, irrespective of the purposes for which the money is to be used. These burdens are in various ways crippling Britain's powers of production; and, in particular—in conjunction with a general insistence upon maintaining an improved standard of living without regard to the reduced means of doing so, which is to be seen in all classes—it is very seriously reducing the habit of saving and investment in large sections of the community. For these reasons Britain has ceased to be the great creditor-nation of the world, and the chief purveyor of capital for the development of the world's natural resources: that position, with the power and influence that flow from it, is passing to the United States. Nor has the banking system of the country, in spite of its stability, shown itself capable of meeting the demands of the difficult post-war period. Brought under the control of a few vast organizations,

it has lost much of the elasticity which it once displayed ; and it has used the command which it wields over the supply of credit in such a way as often to cripple and inhibit rather than to assist commercial and industrial enterprise.

Again, Britain no longer, since the war, holds the commanding position which used to be hers as the supreme trading nation of the world. She still owns and works about one-third of the world's ships, because she is still the freest market in the world ; but her ships are only half employed. She has lost a dangerously large proportion of the oversea trade by which she lives, though her exports (in proportion to population) are still nearly twice as great as those of her principal rivals. This is not wholly or mainly, though it may be partly, her own fault. During the war she had to sacrifice most of her foreign markets in order to concentrate her whole national strength upon war work. The vacuum was filled partly by nations (such as Japan and the United States) which were not severely strained by the war, and partly by the rise of national industries in the countries which she once supplied. Since the war these industries have been protected by high tariffs, and the general urge of all the nations, inside Europe and beyond it, towards "self-sufficiency," has led to similar results. The con-



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sequence is that Britain, which cannot dream of being self-sufficient, but can only exist by trading on a colossal scale with all the world, has been to some extent reduced to a position analogous to that of post-war Vienna. Like Vienna, she depended for her prosperity upon being the centre of an immense converging traffic; like Vienna, she has suffered by the erection of innumerable barriers across the lines of this traffic. So serious have been the results of this change, which is the principal cause of the high figures of unemployment, that a large body of opinion has grown up which advocates the drastic course of ceasing to offer a free market, and adopting instead the policy of "self-sufficiency" which other countries are pursuing. And, since it is obvious that Britain can never be self-sufficient unless she can get rid of about one-half of her dense population, the aim of attaining self-sufficiency on a larger scale by bringing about the economic unity of the Empire is being urgently advocated. Even if the members of the Empire were willing to abandon the pursuit of self-sufficiency on their own account, which they are not likely soon to do, this involves, if not the abandonment, at least the deliberate discouragement of two-thirds of the oversea trade which Britain still possesses, in order to concentrate upon the development of the remaining one-

third. Evidently this implies a complete departure from the policy upon which the whole British economic system has hitherto rested.

These changes, regarded as a whole, amount to a revolution in the position and outlook of Britain which demands a re-orientation of national policy. Britain is clearly passing through a period of crisis, or even of national emergency. But none of these changes is in itself vital. Britain's insular position no longer yields her safety ; but a sane world-policy can yield her a greater safety : and this island, lying at the centre of the most important ocean traffic routes and near the heart of civilization, still holds the most magnificent geographical position that any country on the globe possesses. Britain is no longer the undisputed mistress of the seas ; but what does that matter, if the seas are kept at peace ? She no longer " controls " an empire ; but it is a far finer thing to be the heart of a Commonwealth of free Nations, provided that this Commonwealth is well organized for co-operation in freedom. : She may have been backward in the most modern methods of industrial organization, but this can be amended by rational effort, and the compactness of her industrial areas, and their nearness to the ports from which they draw their supplies



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and to the sources of power, give her immense advantages if they are wisely used. She may be deficient in hydro-electric power and in oil, but both can be supplied, by science and energy, from her rich coal-measures. Her financial strength may be diminished, but it is still great, and can be vastly increased by proper measures for the encouragement of thrift ; while the burden of her taxes, which is proportionally scarcely greater than it was a hundred years ago, can be reduced by a wisely guided national effort. She cannot hope to maintain her one-time preponderance in world-trade, but if the directors and the workers of her industries will face up to the fact that they must by their efficiency be able to meet all reasonable competition on equal terms, and will put their houses in order, she can recover enough of her markets to ensure to her people a steadily improving livelihood, and she can vastly increase the development of her own resources and those of the Empire.

To attain these ends, however, something of a combined national effort, like that which brought victory in the war, would seem to be needed ; the creeping paralysis of apathy and defeatism must be conquered. Ultimately this must depend upon the character and quality of the country's government. For, in the modern world, the functions of govern-

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ment are enormously more far-reaching and vital than they ever were in the past, and the way in which they are performed exercises a much deeper influence upon the spirit of the people than it ever did. Hence it is important to inquire how the British system of government, whose fame in the world has been so great, has adjusted itself to the exacting demands of the post-war period.

The answer cannot be very satisfactory. If we are to judge by results, the British system has been less successful than the more modern systems of France and Germany in stimulating a united national effort and in guiding the nation through a troubled period. If we may judge by the average temper of the people in all classes, the system has not succeeded in bringing forward, and giving responsibility to, leaders of courage and constructive imagination who can command the confidence of the nation, as (in spite of all their defects) Stresemann did in Germany, and Poincaré and Briand in France. It has not succeeded in inspiring the nation with a sense of the need for a combined effort, or provided them with the needful leadership in making it.

The explanation may perhaps be found in the fact that Britain is facing a new age with a governmental machine which is incapable of dealing with its problems. Politics appear



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to be too much dominated by the incessant rivalry for power of parties which devote their strength, not to constructive work, but to denouncing and trying to discredit one another. Political parties are indispensable instruments of democratic government. But the parties of Britain appear to be so rigidly organized that the control of their policy falls into the hands of small caucuses or dictator-leaders, against whom even their own followers, though they may vote obediently to order, are in a constant state of repressed revolt, because they are denied freedom of action and even of discussion.

We have elsewhere (Chapter III) discussed the recent development of the British system of government. Its chief features are two : (1) the concentration of all power, legislative, financial, and administrative, in the hands of a small party-cabinet, which is so overwhelmed by the magnitude of its own responsibilities that it cannot take a broad view of national needs ; and (2) the practical withdrawal from Parliament of anything beyond a merely formal control over the actions of Government, and its limitation, in effect, to the task of criticism. Parliament can discredit and impede the work of government ; it is debarred from doing anything, in a constructive way, to improve it. In these conditions, it is perhaps not surprising

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that the task of facing and dealing with a serious national emergency has not been very successfully accomplished. If Britain is to face with confidence the problems of the post-war era, it would seem that her first task should be to improve her machinery of leadership and government.

### 2. *The British Empire*

The British Empire consists of three distinct elements : first, the great self-governing dominions, which are, and have long been, autonomous states, linked to Britain only by allegiance to a common Crown, and by a partnership in the institutions of freedom ; secondly, the oriental lands of ancient civilization, India, Ceylon, Malaya, over which the control exercised by the British Government is more direct, though these lands have also claimed, and in recent years exercised in some degree, the rights of self-government ; and, thirdly, the dependent empire, including vast areas in Africa acquired only during the last half-century, which, under a great variety of forms, is effectively under control of the British Government. This strange composite empire, which includes one-quarter of the area and one-quarter of the population of the globe, has no uniformity of structure or system, nor is its obedience ensured by any effective central compulsive force, other than



the power of the Navy. Since 1830 it has been changing its character in a haphazard way, gradually undergoing the transformation from an Empire in the strict sense of the term into what it has become fashionable to term a Commonwealth of Nations.

Until the eve of the war, however, it was a unit in at least two important respects. It pursued a single foreign policy, which was directed from Whitehall; even the great Dominions, though the nationalist spirit was at work in them, were content to leave foreign relations in the hands of the British Foreign Office, because they knew and cared little about European problems, and did not imagine that they were concerned in them. It was only in the troubled years before the war, when the German menace was becoming serious, that the representatives of the Dominions were taken into consultation upon foreign affairs, in the Imperial Conferences of 1907 and 1911; but no formal steps had yet been taken to organize common consultation or direction: the British Foreign Secretary was still the Foreign Secretary of the whole Empire. Again, the whole Empire depended upon a common system of defence, almost the whole burden of which fell upon Britain. The pivot of this system was, of course, the navy, which kept open the ocean-channels of communication between the various parts of

the Empire ; for, in effect, the British Empire is nowhere vulnerable by land, except on the north-west frontier of India. In the years before the war there was (because of the fear of Germany) for the first time common consultation about defence ; the Dominions made some contributions to the cost of the Navy, and the small military forces which they maintained were reorganized on the same lines as the British Army, which had recently been recast by Lord Haldane. But there was no imperial *system* of defence, any more than there was imperial consultation about foreign affairs.

Because of this laxity of organization, it was widely anticipated that the Empire would fall to pieces at the first threat of war : Germany, in particular, expected that the Dominions would stand aloof, that India would break into revolt, and that the recent annexations in Africa and elsewhere would have to be controlled by substantial forces. Among the most remarkable features of the war were the unanimous and enthusiastic loyalty of almost every part of the Empire, and the magnitude of the sacrifices, in life and in money, which were willingly offered by peoples at the ends of the earth. Canada, New Zealand and Australia enlisted almost their entire manhood. A brief rebellion of the more irreconcilable Boers of South Africa



was suppressed by the Boers themselves, and both races in South Africa thereafter played a vigorous part in the conquest of the German colonies, and sent contingents to the trenches in France. In India the political agitation, which had been afoot before the war, was stilled ; and forces far greater than India had ever before put into the field saw service in France, in Palestine, in Mesopotamia and in China. Lax and unsystematic as it was, the free structure of the Empire seemed to be justified by the ordeal of war.

But the very magnitude of these sacrifices changed the whole attitude of the Empire towards the problems of foreign policy and defence, and brought about very important changes in its structure. It would never again be possible for these questions to be treated as if they were no concern of the outlying members of the Empire. In one form or another, the spokesmen of the Empire must henceforth be taken into consultation, if the Empire was not to break up.

Moreover, India could not but feel that, having played so great a part in the war, her claim was greatly strengthened not only to be consulted through the British officials who conducted the government, but to be recognized as a distinct community, and to be endowed with the autonomous rights which other parts of the Empire enjoyed. Thus

the war directly quickened the nationalist movement both in India and in other parts of the Empire, as we have seen in an earlier chapter.

In Ireland, also, the war seemed to provide an opportunity of striking a blow for the rights of self-government which she had long demanded. Though Ireland was juridically a part of the United Kingdom, fully represented in the British Parliament, she was the only part of the Empire which used the war as an opportunity for revolt—as she had done in each of the three previous European wars in which Britain had been engaged, in the sixteenth, the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. There was an open rebellion in 1916 ; though this was suppressed, it was not felt to be safe to make the same demands upon the manhood of Ireland that were made upon the manhood of England, Scotland and Wales ; and while many Irishmen enlisted voluntarily, the Irish people as a whole stood aloof and prayed for a British defeat. When the war was over, the smouldering rebellion broke out afresh ; and after an ugly civil war Britain had to yield to force, in 1921, what she had hitherto refused to concede to constitutional agitation. She had to yield it, indeed, in a much more sweeping form than would, at an earlier date, have satisfied the Irish people ; and four-fifths of Ireland was



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in 1921 recognized as the Irish Free State, a full autonomous state enjoying what is called "dominion status," with the right to impose her own tariffs, raise her own army, make her own laws, and coin her own money. Thus the only part of the Empire in which a demand for self-government had been consistently refused was the only part of the Empire which repudiated any obligation of loyalty during the war. Not the least remarkable of the political consequences of the war was the termination, in this drastic way, of the long controversy which had lasted for four centuries. The moral of this contrast was that freedom, not compulsion, is the cement which holds the Empire together; it is the first Empire in the history of the world of which this could be said.

The first consequence of the demand for fuller participation in the control of imperial affairs was the invitation to a representative group of Dominion and Indian statesmen to become members of the "War Cabinet"; and they took a full and active part in the determination of policy during the later stages of the war. This might have been expected to lead to the permanent organization of more intimate methods of co-operation. It did not do so; and this for a reason which, in the judgment of some students, was ominous of the coming dissolution of the

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Empire. In the Peace Conference, delegations from the Dominions and from India were present, not merely as elements in a British Empire delegation, but in their own right ; and they signed the Treaties as independent powers. When the League of Nations was constituted, the Dominions and India appeared again, though in a somewhat modified way : the British Empire as a unit became a permanent member of the Council ; but Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and India became members of the Assembly as distinct powers ; and Canada has actually held a seat on the Council, as one of the non-permanent members. On any strict interpretation, this would seem to imply that, within the world-society, the Empire is no longer recognized as a political unit, but its various members are treated as independent, sovereign powers. In and through the League, the Dominions have obtained their full share in the discussion of international questions ; but what they discuss is not the policy to be pursued by the Empire of which they are parts : they intervene in the discussions as independent powers.

Thus the war, which displayed so powerful a loyalty among the members of the Empire, has been followed by a very remarkable relaxation of the bonds which hold them



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together. The Dominions claim, and exercise without protest, the right of appointing ambassadors of their own to foreign powers : there are Canadian and Irish ministers at Washington. They claim, also, the right of negotiating treaties independently with foreign powers : South Africa has concluded such a treaty with Germany. Britain, on her side, has recognized this progressive disintegration of the Empire as a political unit. In the Treaties of Locarno it was specifically laid down that Britain alone was committed by the undertakings accepted in the Treaty ; the Dominions were not to be involved. This was done at the request of the Dominions themselves ; it was done because the policy represented by the Treaties was not adopted as the result of a common agreement among the members of the Empire, but by the independent decision of Britain. There is no machinery whereby a common imperial policy can be defined.

The British Empire has therefore become, since the war, an extraordinarily loose political system. It is not a single state, save in its nominal subjection to a single Crown. It is not a federation. It is not even a formal alliance or league, for no treaty binds its members to take common action. It is a loose partnership of independent states, linked together by sentiment and by com-

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mon interests, every member of which is free to go its own way at any moment. This position was fully and clearly recognized at the Imperial Conference of 1926; the resolutions passed at that conference form a landmark in the history of the British Empire, and may be regarded by future historians as recording the final abandonment of any attempt to reach closer political unity—perhaps as the final and friendly dissolution of the Empire. The Dominions are definitely bound as Members of the League of Nations. They are in no way bound as members of the Empire.

Yet the Dominions (with the possible exception of the Irish Free State and perhaps of South Africa) regard themselves as being members of the Empire in a far more intimate sense than they are members of the League. The difference between the two organizations is that the League has developed far more efficient machinery for common consultation and action than the Empire has yet thought of instituting. The League has its regular annual Assembly, with public debates, and the quarterly meetings of its Council; the Empire has only the Imperial Conference which meets once in four years, and has no very definite functions. The League has a highly organized Permanent Secretariat, with special staffs of experts



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to deal with military, economic, labour, health, and other problems ; the Empire has no central organization save what is provided by the Colonial Office, which is a part of the governmental machinery of one member of the Empire, and therefore cannot act with the joint authorization of all.

General Smuts, perhaps the greatest of imperial statesmen, though thirty years ago he was in arms against the Empire, has strongly urged that the process of decentralization has gone far enough—has gone, indeed, so far, that it has become a process of disintegration ; and, holding strongly that a political bond which has given peace to a quarter of the world is too valuable to be permitted to disappear by a mere process of attrition, he has urged that a process of integration should now be undertaken, of such a kind as would not involve any diminution of the autonomy of the various parts, any more than the League does.

If this process is to be undertaken, four things in particular would seem to be necessary. The first would be some means of continuous consultation on foreign policy, so as to ensure that the Empire should act together, within the League ; by these means the Empire (which has been the greatest peace-maintaining power in the world) would be able to play a great part in the strengthen-

ing of world-peace. The second would be a common policy of imperial defence for the fulfilment of any obligations which might accrue under the Covenant of the League, and for the maintenance of peace and law in the vast expanses of backward and undeveloped territory included within the Empire. The third would be some means of consultation and agreement in regard to the treatment of the backward peoples who now form so large an element in the population of the Empire. The main responsibility for the government of these peoples now falls upon Britain; but South Africa has very great responsibilities in this field; and, since the war, both Australia and New Zealand have undertaken Mandates for large territories, in New Guinea and in the Pacific, while Canada has her own problem in dealing with the Red Indians of the west and the Esquimaux of the north. In view of the greatness of the responsibilities which the British peoples have assumed for guiding backward peoples into civilization, they have given very little scientific study to the problems which this task presents; and they have made no attempt to define, in consultation, the principles on which it should be carried out. Finally, there is clearly need for common action in the economic field. The British peoples have (somewhat lightheartedly) undertaken



the immense task of developing for the use of humanity an enormous proportion of the most valuable undeveloped regions of the globe. This should not be regarded merely as an opportunity for exploitation, nor should it be left to chance, or to the unregulated control of big "rationalized" commercial ventures; it should be planned, on a co-operative basis, in consultation between all the states of the Empire which share this responsibility; and it should be so carried out as to ensure just treatment for the primitive peoples.

This is not the place for any discussion of the means by which these tasks should be undertaken, or of the machinery which would be needed to carry them out. But it is clear that unless the task of empire development is approached in something like this spirit, and with a large imaginative grasp of the possibilities, the British Empire, as an effective political organization, is not likely to last much longer. Since the war it has been drifting rapidly towards a painless dissolution. If this drift continues, it will be an evidence of the bankruptcy of British statesmanship.

The need for a vigorous policy of imperial co-operation has led to the agitation of proposals which aim at achieving greater unity by means of fiscal bonds. It is proposed, if the Dominions and India can be persuaded to

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abandon or relax their policy of economic self-sufficiency, to return to the methods of imperial policy which were pursued between 1660 and the revolt of the American colonies : to set up, first of all, a tariff-barrier round the Empire against all non-British countries, and (within this barrier) to establish gradually a system of imperial free trade. By these means it is hoped to attain, on the wider scale of the Empire, a self-sufficiency which obviously cannot be attained in Britain ; and the Empire would become a fiscal unit corresponding to the United States, and to the vision of a United States of Europe which has been advocated as a remedy for European distress, though with small prospects of success. The difficulties in the way of this project are, of course, gigantic. The Dominions and India have shown no signs of readiness to depart from the policy of self-sufficiency which they have pursued, or to admit British goods which compete with their own products. The dependent empire owes its prosperity largely to the fact that it is able to trade freely with all countries, and other trading nations would resent any departure from this policy ; moreover, many of these colonies, especially those under mandate from the League of Nations, are bound by treaty to give equal access to all traders. Even if these difficulties could be overcome,



there are many who believe that if the British Empire were to turn itself into an exclusive fiscal unit, it would become a cause of friction and war instead of a cause of peace, and that the adoption of the policy of self-sufficiency and exclusion on this gigantic scale would be a disaster for the world; while there are others who believe that Britain herself cannot safely take the risk of sacrificing the two-thirds of her trade which is carried on with foreign countries in order to develop the one-third which is carried on with the rest of the Empire.

The controversy on this fiscal issue is quite independent of the larger issue, which it tends to obscure. Is the process of disintegration, which seems to have been at work in the British Empire since the war, to continue unchecked? Is the Empire to continue as a fellowship of nations linked by merely sentimental bonds, far less efficiently equipped with the machinery for co-operation than the less intimate fellowship of the League of Nations? Or can it be provided, in a manner which would in no degree invade the autonomy of its members, with organs for consultation and common action in foreign policy, in defence, in the government of backward peoples, and in the scientific development of the vast areas for which it has assumed responsibility? Such an organiza-

tion would, of course, in no sense be in conflict with the aims of the League of Nations, which it would strengthen ; nor would it add to the danger of friction in the world, unless it was accompanied by a policy of trade exclusiveness. It would mean only that the most gigantic comradeship of varied peoples which the world has ever seen was using the strength that comes from co-operation in making available the resources of a quarter of the earth's surface, not for its own profit only, but for the advantage of the whole civilized world, and for the progress of the backward peoples.

Among the problems which the war has raised, and left unsolved, there is none which is more challenging than this.





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